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Father David W. Mura celebrated the first Monroe County Youth Mass at Irondequoit's Christ the King Church on Oct. 16. In the above photo, Father Mura (center, behind altar) is joined by teenagers during the offertory. At the altar's base are food donations by the youths to benefit St. Andrew's Food Cupboard.

Wendy Longlade/Photo intern

Energetic service appeals to Monroe County youths

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

IRONDEQUOIT — A little merriment might wind up going a long way for this gathering of young Catholics.

An abundance of laughs, hand-clapping and thundering refrains of "amen" echoed through the Church of Christ the King this past Sunday evening, Oct. 16. Approximately 200 teenagers from several Monroe County parishes convened for this lively Mass, courtesy of Father David W. Mura.

Father Mura, pastor of Rochester's Holy Apostles/St. Anthony of Padua Parish Cluster, repeatedly relied on humor in imploring teenagers to practice their faith more openly.

He cut short the opening song being played by Christ the King youth musicians to ask the congregation, "How many of you have rotten singing voices? And how many think the people next to you have rotten voices?"

After several hands went up, Father Mura informed the youths that "God gave you those voices, so let's pay Him

back" by singing as loudly as possible. Subsequent responses were, not surprisingly, much more vocal.

Later, during the prayers of the faithful, one participant prayed "for Notre Dame." Father Mura quickly replied, "It's too late," referring to the Fighting Irish's 21-14 football loss to Brigham Young one day earlier.

Father Mura, an active participant in several youth-related events throughout the diocese, admitted to the teenagers gathered at Christ the King that when he was growing up, "if we'd smiled at Mass we'd have been struck by lightning."

But Paul Anastasi, Christ the King's youth minister, saw Father Mura's approach as an important motivator for



Vicki Sienkiewicz lends her singing voice to the Oct. 16 service.

heightening young Catholics' faith. "They're paying attention to him, aren't they?" Anastasi remarked as he observed scores of youths squeezing in around Father Mura at the altar during the offertory.

"It was a lot like a retreat. It opened the kids up," added Jackie Marron, 17, a parishioner at Greece's St. Charles Borromeo Church.

Anastasi explained that the idea for a county-wide Mass grew out of the "Vision Quest" sessions which took place at the Diocesan Youth Convention in August. According to Anastasi, several participants during these discussions had expressed the desire for gatherings encompassing more than one parish youth group.

"I like them because we get to see the people we've met (at other events). It's a way to keep in touch," said Christ the King youth-group member Dan Monaco, 17, who has also joined up with fellow teens from the Rochester diocese during 1993 excursions to World Youth Day in Denver and the National Catholic Youth Convention in Philadelphia.

Two additional county teen Masses have already been scheduled for 1995: on Feb. 11 at Spencerport's St. John the Evangelist Church; and on May 6 at Sacred Heart Cathedral.

Teens for Peace hold march, rally

ROCHESTER — Nearly one year after its formation, Teens for Peace is continuing to make its voice heard.

Those voices were especially noticeable at the Liberty Pole last Monday, Oct. 10, when Teens for Peace members chanted the day's theme: "Live It, Believe, It, Act It — Silence the Violence."

The Liberty Pole rally was part of an ecumenical convention staged by Teens for Peace. More than 50 Rochester-area teenagers gathered for the event, which began at St. Mary's Church downtown. A "peace march" followed, during which participants walked from St. Mary's to the Liberty Pole to hear presentations by several speakers, including Rochester Mayor William A. Johnson Jr. and David Koon, whose daughter, Jennifer, was murdered last year.

Teens for Peace held its first public event in January of 1994, when a peace rally and prayer service took place at St. Bridget's Church to commemorate Rochester's 70 homicide victims — a record number — for 1993. In addition, billboards with images of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the words "Live the Dream: Stop the Violence" were displayed at two city locations.

Jennifer Knitter, who chaired the Oct. 10 convention, was pleased with its results.

"We're really growing and really happy," said Jennifer, a sophomore at Nazareth Academy.

Individuals or groups wishing to join Teens for Peace, or learn more about this non-profit group, are invited to call 716/234-6347.

— Mike Latona

Registration begins for diocesan high-school retreats

Registration is open for diocesan "Awakening Faith" and "Encountering Christ" youth retreats scheduled over the next several months.

"Awakening Faith" retreats, for youths in grades 9-10, will take place Nov. 18-20, 1994, at the Rotary Sunshine Camp in Rush; Feb. 19-21, 1995, at the Notre Dame Retreat Center in Canandaigua; April 7-9, 1995, at the Watson Homestead in Painted Post; and May 12-14, 1995, at the Rotary Sunshine Camp.

"Encountering Christ" retreats, for teenagers in grades 11-12, are scheduled for Dec. 9-11, 1994, at Notre Dame Retreat House; and March 10-12, 1995, at Watson Homestead.

The cost of each retreat is \$68. Financial assistance is also available depending upon need.

For application information and further details, call 716/328-3210, ext. 279 (in Monroe County) or 1-800/388-7177, ext. 279 (outside Monroe County).

Church initiates program for children ages 4-12

ROCHESTER — New Jerusalem Church, located at 890 N. Goodman St., has begun a "Pioneer Club" for boys and girls ages 4-12.

This club includes a variety of skill-

building activities as well as Bible study.

For details about the Pioneer Club, call the New Jerusalem church office at 716/288-0030.