

Group support guides teens through fast

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

WEBSTER — This tranquil scene was not what you'd expect from some high-schoolers who had gone without food or drink for 24 hours.

Immediately following the Good Friday afternoon services at St. Paul's Church on April 14, a group of 16 teenagers and four adult leaders huddled closely in a downstairs room for prayer and reflection.

Then, ever so slowly, they broke their fast by eating bits of bread and sipping grape juice.

Thus ended an intense spiritual experience which has become a Holy Week tradition for teens at St. Paul's Church, 783 Hard Road.

For more than two decades, participants have held a fast which begins at approximately 6 p.m. on Holy Thursday and ends at the same time on Good Friday.

During this year's fast, youths took part in Holy Week events with the rest of the St. Paul's congregation, such as Holy Thursday and Good Friday services as well as a noontime Stations of the Cross on Friday.

In addition, the 24-hour period was packed with a variety of special activities for the teens, such as group discussions, journal writing and meditations. Their only significant break came during a seven-hour sleep period.

This annual ritual was begun 21 years ago by Bob Cobbett, a St. Paul's parishioner who still helps direct the fasts. Three main objectives are tied in with the event: to identify with the sufferings of Jesus in some small way; to focus on

Musical set for May 5-7 at Bishop Kearney High

IRONDEQUOIT — The musical "Anything Goes" will be presented at Bishop Kearney High School, 125 Kings Highway S., on May 5-6 at 8 p.m. and May 7 at 3 p.m.

This Cole Porter classic will feature a student cast of 12 performers with additional chorus and dance members. Serving as director is Christine Zaccour, a 1988 BK graduate who currently teaches at the school.

Tickets, available at the door, will be \$7 each. For further details, call 716/342-4000.



Under direction from Bob Cobbett (far left), St. Paul's youth members join in an exercise promoting group unity during an overnight fast and vigil at the Webster parish.

S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

the daily hunger of many people throughout the world; and to say 'no' so that one can better focus on the Lord.

According to this year's participants, the rigors of fasting were eased by the group's ability to bond closely.

"I don't think I'd be able to do it without them," said Jessica Covell, 15, who also helped out as an altar server during Good Friday services.

"The support we give for one another is what keeps us going," added Kristine Mich, who serves as St. Paul's youth minister.

"It wouldn't have been as spiritual if I'd been by myself," observed Becky Welter, 17.

"If I'm home and just sitting there, I eat because I'm bored. But here I didn't seem to need to," remarked Chris Lewis, 15.

Meditation also played an important



Becky Welter centers on her candle during a meditation period Holy Thursday evening.

role in keeping Chris' thoughts away from food, he added.

"We lit a candle (late at night) and emptied our minds by centering on it," Chris said. "I was really hungry before that, but after that nothing seemed to matter."

Nevertheless, the dinner of cheese pizza, salad, fruit, potato chips and soda which followed the fast-breaking seemed to disappear quite rapidly.

Mich pointed out that this fast has been a consistently popular way for young St. Paul's parishioners to celebrate their faith. She noted that many of last week's participants had been involved in previous Holy Week fasts.

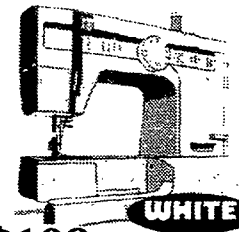
"There's a lot of depth and reflection going on," she said. "I'm particularly impressed with this group and how they've entered into the spirit of the vigil and fast so beautifully."

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Retiring as Music Director for Saint John the Evangelist Church, Humboldt Street, Rochester.

To celebrate Sister Margaret's 35 Years of Dedication and Service to St. John's Parish, she will be Honored at the 11:00 a.m. Mass on Sunday, the Fourth of June.

Mass will be followed by a Picnic-Party at Bristol Mountain.

For additional information and registration, contact the the Sullivan Center, before May 15 at 482-6211.

Public Invited!