

YOUNG ADULTS

Groups offer opportunities for fun, service, support

By Rob Cullivan and Mike Latona
Staff writers

Are there parishes in the Diocese of Rochester where young adults can find a social and spiritual home? Apparently the answer is yes, if you ask leaders and members of young adult ministry groups in the diocese.

One parish that has attempted to serve the needs of young adults for years is Blessed Sacrament in Rochester.

Members of that parish's young adult group gather on the third Tuesday of each month for a worship service of some sort — either a Mass, a Eucharist service, and/or prayer and discussion.

In addition, several young adults from Blessed Sacrament are active volunteers in the parish-sponsored Supper Program, which provides meals for the poor five nights per week.

The Blessed Sacrament young adults have also sponsored "coffeehouse" entertainment nights to raise funds for the Supper Program.

Mary Merner, a five-year member of the Blessed Sacrament group, noted that good planning and organization have contributed to the ministry's longevity.

"You have to have a core group of individuals who are dedicated to planning events," said Merner, who also serves on Blessed Sacrament's young-adult planning team.

Members of Holy Ghost Church in Gates hope to achieve a similar success story. That parish's young-adult group was launched last summer, when recreational events such as volleyball and miniature golf were staged. According to Holy Ghost core-group member Lisa Klaver, the young adults also delivered gifts to the homebound at holiday time and recently sponsored a Rochester Amerks hockey night.

Arthur. Louis Di Nieri III, another core-group member, is hoping this ministry will attract young adult Catholics who may have drifted away from their faith.

"To get them back into the church, you have to have a lot of social functions and spiritual functions," Di Nieri commented.

Klaver and Di Nieri emphasized that they do not limit their scope to Holy Ghost parishioners. All are welcome, especially from nearby parishes in the Gates area.

"The more, the merrier," Di Nieri remarked.

Meanwhile, Maura Sweeney, young

adult minister at St. Dominic's in Shortsville, said the parish may invite its young adults to form a small Christian community.

The diocese has formally encouraged the formation of small groups of Catholics who meet regularly since the 1993 Diocesan Synod designated small Christian communities as a major goal.

Sweeney noted that St. Dominic's sees a small Christian community geared toward young adults as one way the parish can include them in an overall renewal effort this year.

"I think we're just hoping to reach out to our young adults," she said.

That's all that young adults need to see

to respond positively to the church's need for them, explained Mike Drexler, Blessed Sacrament's young adult director. In particular, young adults are enthusiastic to become parish lectors, eucharistic ministers and musicians, he said, but they must feel their parish wants and needs their time and talent. Those who preach should also specifically address young adult concerns in their homilies, he said.

Call Rob Cullivan or Mike Latona at 716/328-4340 if you would like to share your concerns about parish young adult ministry, or write them at *Catholic Courier*, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624-1899.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer
YOUNG ADULTS HIT THE TRAILS - Mendon Ponds Park was the site of a winter cabin party hosted by the Blessed Sacrament Young Adult Ministry on Feb. 3. Participants enjoyed afternoon activities including cross-country skiing, and later socialized with board games, a hot meal and a cozy fire.

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