

MOVE on the

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CATHOLIC COURIER • DIOCESE OF RO

HOW WE

PRAY



Is there a right or wrong?
Story by Mike Latona • Photographs by Matthew Scott

You may feel more comfortable praying in private than in public. Or perhaps it's the other way around. You may gain tremendous spiritual satisfaction from saying a rosary. Or you might enjoy talking out loud to God as you take a walk. At church, you might feel right at home with a liturgy full of folk music, hand-clapping and hugging. Or you may prefer a more solemn, traditional approach to Mass.

With so many choices available, you may sometimes wonder: what form of prayer is better than all the rest?

None, according to three diocesan teens. "Different people have different ways to pray. As long as it brings you closer to God," said Christie Schneider, 17, a parishioner at St. John the Evangelist Church in Newark Valley.



Tami Ziobrowski of St. Jude's Church, Gates, says praying while walking through her back yard helps her feel closer to God.

"Just communicating with God, in any form, is prayer," added Luke Gabello, 18, from St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Irondequoit.

"When you've got a problem you're dealing with and you want to just get in touch with God, you use any way possible," said Tami Ziobrowski, 16, from St. Jude's Church in Gates.

Tami added that she employs various

methods of private prayer.

"I say a rosary when something really big is happening, like if somebody's sick. It seems like you're making more of an effort to get God's attention," Tami said.

Tami pointed out that praying is more than just asking God for favors. Rather, it can also be a kind of *sharing* process.

"I talk to God like I'd be talking to one of my friends," Tami said.

When using this less structured approach, Tami said she frequently opts for an outdoor setting.

"I go to a clearing in my back yard, or sometimes I walk on the beach," she said. "It helps to relax you, and at the same time it's like, 'Wow, God has created all this beauty.' It just takes you away. I feel more in touch with my religion."

Luke, meanwhile, drops in a few times per week to his parish's perpetual-adoration chapel for a 15-minute prayer session. Luke shares Tami's belief that one's surroundings can be essential in the depth of one's prayers.

"When I'm focusing on the body of Christ, I feel like the prayers are more powerful and meaningful," Luke said.

Luke said he was brought up largely with traditional prayers, but that his

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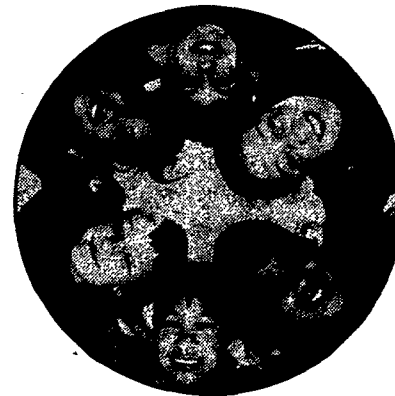
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