


*A child shall lead them* 

# Granddaughter's beliefs inspire Livingston man

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

LIVONIA — Next week, 9-year-old Erica Retzer will attend her first midnight Mass as a fully initiated Catholic.

That event will also mark the return to a childhood tradition for Erica's grandfather, Clyde Retzer.

"Every Christmas we woke up at 10 p.m., opened presents and went off to midnight Mass," recalled Clyde, 61.

Due to the influence of his only grandchild, Clyde said, he is reviving a custom that he had abandoned for 30 years.

Clyde and his wife, Rosie, 66, served as Erica's sponsors in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults program at St. Joseph/St. William Parish in Livonia and Conesus. Erica was initiated last April, receiving the sacraments of baptism, first Eucharist and confirmation during the Easter Vigil Mass at St. Joseph's.

Clyde had been away from the church for several years, he said, because he disagreed with changes made by the Second Vatican Council. However, his bitterness melted away as he observed Erica's RCIA class preparing for initiation at their Livingston County parish.

"They were so interested in it. Here's a guy who's been halfway around the world and thought he knew everything, and it turns out he doesn't know a dadgum thing," remarked Clyde, a retired Air Force sergeant.

He added that Father William A. Trott, the St. Joseph/St. William pastor who died Oct. 1, also played a key role in his spiritual reawakening.

"Father Trott had a lot to do with changing my mind. He didn't seem to care if you were Satan himself. He was there to help you," Clyde said.

Chris Coniglio, intergenerational faith formation director at St. Joseph/St. William, marveled at the dedication Clyde and Rosie have exhibited in enhancing their granddaughter's spiritual journey.

"It's very apparent how committed they are to supporting Erica. They've really found a home at St. Joe's," Coniglio said, noting that Clyde and Rosie reside in Tuscarora, about a 30-minute drive from Livonia.

Clyde pointed out that his granddaughter appears eager to deepen her

faith. Erica — who lives with her mother, Stacy Buchanan, in Groveland Station — owns a wide variety of religious articles including children's books, rosaries and five Bibles.

In addition, Erica has ready knowledge of Christmas history. She quickly recited events surrounding Christ's birth, noting that Jesus was born on Christmas Day and recalling "the three men who went out to find the baby."

Erica has also gotten into the Christmas spirit by making a personalized rug as part of a parish Advent project. The rug includes parts of Father Trott's clothing, as well as a portion of a dress Erica has owned since she was 2. Rosie recalled that she bought the dress when Erica went to visit her father, Joe (Clyde and Rosie's son) in South Carolina, where he had just completed Army boot camp.

Other material in Erica's rug includes part of a dress Rosie has owned since she was a young woman living in her native Japan. She and Clyde were married 39 years ago while he was stationed there.

According to Coniglio, the Advent rug project is meant to help bring tranquility to an otherwise hectic time of year.

"We're so busy doing so much," Coniglio said. "This would be a perfect time to sit and bring back all our memories, and remember who we are."

Erica's rug will take several months to complete. Once it's finished, she plans to use it as a comfortable resting spot during religious-education classes.

"They're prayer rugs, so that when (students) have a Jesus story they can share their own story," Coniglio explained.

In the meantime, the Retzer family will share its own special Jesus story at midnight Mass next week.

"Coming to Mass together, I'll like that very much," Rosie said.

"This has brought us all closer together," Clyde concluded.



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer  
Erica Retzer (left) works on her Advent rug project in the parish center at St. Joseph Church, Livonia, with her grandparents Clyde and Rosie.

## NEW YEAR'S EVE GALA



Lavish Prime Rib Buffet Including Leg of Lamb, Breast of Chicken, Tortellini Alfredo, Broiled Fish Fillet

Early Seating 5:00-7:30  
\$19.95 pp (plus tax and gratuity)  
Late Seating 8:00-10:30  
\$29.95 pp (plus tax and gratuity)

FREE Champagne, Hats & Noisemakers at Midnite!  
DANCING UNTIL 2AM!

For Reservations  
Call 716-546-2490



1400 Midtown Tower  
Free Indoor Parking  
in the Midtown Garage



## A Very Happy Holiday Season to the Catholic Community

from  
**Cassidy Plumbing and Heating**

11 Comfort Street  
Rochester  
**716-232-2000**



## Season's Greetings

from  
**ST. JOHN FISHER COLLEGE**

3690 East Avenue  
Rochester

RADISSON HOTEL AT ROCHESTER PLAZA

## New Year's Eve Gala 1996

PREMIER NEW YEAR'S PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- Deluxe Overnight Accommodations for Two
- DINNER FOR TWO IN OUR GRAND BALLROOM  
A Dual Entree featuring Chicken French and Filet Mignon
- OPEN BAR Party Favors - Champagne for Midnight Toast
- LIVE ENTERTAINMENT WITH TWO GREAT BANDS 8PM TO 1:30AM  
*Carlton Showband & Twilight*
- NEW YEAR'S DAY BREAKFAST BUFFET

<b>PREMIER PACKAGE</b>	<b>DINNER &amp; PARTY ONLY</b>
Single \$160	Single \$74
Double \$240	Double \$148
<b>ROOM &amp; PARTY ONLY</b>	<b>PARTY ONLY</b>
Single \$138	Single \$42.50
Double \$180	Double \$85

Pricing Includes Tax & Gratuity

For reservations, call  
**716-546-3450**



**Radisson**  
HOTEL AT ROCHESTER PLAZA