

on the MOVE

Faith takes center

It could be an array of clowns delivering a moral message. Or a group reenacting Christ's passion.

Whatever the setting, acting represents much more than entertainment for many diocesan teens.

RaeAnne Smith, 17, performs the Living Stations with the youth group from St. Margaret Mary Church in Apalachin. She is among 40 teens who reenact Christ's passion each Friday during Lent at various churches in the Southern Tier.

"We really want to touch people's hearts with this," RaeAnne remarked.

On Feb. 28, RaeAnne's group apparently accomplished its goal with a Living Stations performance for inmates at the Elmira Correctional Facility.

"You could hear people laughing at first, but by the end, the prisoners were giving a standing ovation," RaeAnne said. She added that many of them were in tears at that point.

RaeAnne plays the role of Mary. She said that by visualizing Mary's emotional pain as Christ was being crucified, she is able to put deeper

feeling into her acting.

"You picture yourself in that time, and you say 'This is my son,'"

RaeAnne said. "It's easier to feel it because it really happened. It's so touching."



According to Michael Theisen, diocesan coordinator of youth ministry, a growing number of youth groups throughout the diocese perform Living Stations.

"A youth group will hear of one parish doing it, and they'll say, 'We're going to try it this year,'" Theisen said.

Theisen pointed out that acting in general is a great way for teens to connect with Catholics of all ages.

"Acting offers young people a creative avenue for involving themselves in ministry to the larger church," Theisen said. "It's an opportunity for them to use their gifts, become involved and express themselves."

One parish where teens can express themselves dramatically is the Cayuga Team Ministry, which is in its second year of performing Living Stations. During Holy Week, the group will perform at each of the cluster's four churches: St. Patrick's Church in Aurora; St. Joseph's Church in Cayuga; Our Lady of the Lake Church in King

Ferry; and St. Michael's Church in Union Springs.

Cayuga's rendition of Living Stations offers a twist this year: It will feature female teens in male roles. But that innovation is out of necessity.

"There (are) only girls doing the Living Stations," explained Lisa Norris, 13, one of 10 participants.

Lisa will portray Christ. Although a female Jesus might surprise some people, Lisa said she is anxious to carry out her acting assignment.

"I wanted to do it. He was God's son and everything," she commented.

Carole Estabrooke, 17, noted that Living Stations helps bring an added dimension to parishioners beyond a Stations of the Cross that is not acted out.

"It's fun to do. You're giving people something to hear and to see," said Carole,

who is playing Mary this year for the Cayuga group.

"Since we're acting it out, people think of it as in real life," RaeAnne noted. "They can feel the emotions of the actors. During the performance you can sometimes hear people weeping."



MISSION NEWS

May God do as He wishes so that neither my suffering, nor my tears, nor my prayers, nor my groans can prevent for one instant the working of His holy will in me...

- Pauline Jaricot, Foundress, Propagation of the Faith

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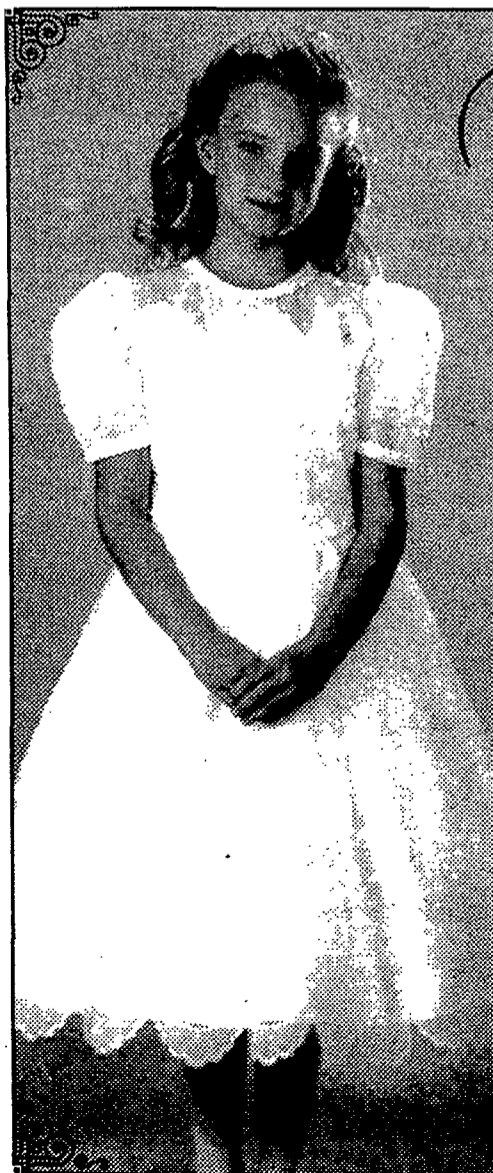
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