

asier with practice

y Mike Latona

by Matthew Scott

consequences could be." Mike said his willingness to forgive under such tough circumstances has increased his capacity to forgive on a daily basis.

"It makes me stronger. If I've done it once, I can do it again," Mike said.

Sarah Rynearson noted that all close relationships require acts of forgiveness at some point.

"It's the everyday little stuff. If they're having a bad day or they're driving you up the wall, you've just got to be there for them and know that it's going to be okay," Sarah, 14, remarked. She and her boyfriend Brian Franchi, 15, are parishioners at St. Michael's Church in Newark.

Brian speaks from personal experience about the pitfalls of being unforgiving. When he was younger, he said, he got into several fights.

"I had a lot of kids I was not friendly with. I did not forgive them for things," Brian said.

As he matured, however, he came to realize that practicing forgiveness and keeping friendships go hand-in-hand.

"Forgiveness is essential in a relationship. Without it, you'd miss out on everything that lies ahead. There would be a lot of rough times and enemies in your life," Brian stated.

Sarah was faced with the loss of a friendship last year, when another girl suddenly turned on her during a school dance and "yelled at me for 40 minutes in front of the whole class."

Although Sarah said she gave the friend no reason to become so upset, she decided to "stand there and let her get it out."

Other people at the dance got

angry and thought the girl should have apologized for her outburst. But Sarah instead extended sympathy and forgiveness to her friend.

"I felt real bad. Her parents were going through a divorce and big custody battle," Sarah said.

Brian said he values the passage in the Lord's Prayer that reminds us to forgive those who trespass against us. At the same time, he stated that most people struggle to grant forgiveness in every instance.

"They could try to, and say they do, but I don't think anybody could do it 100 percent of the time," he said.

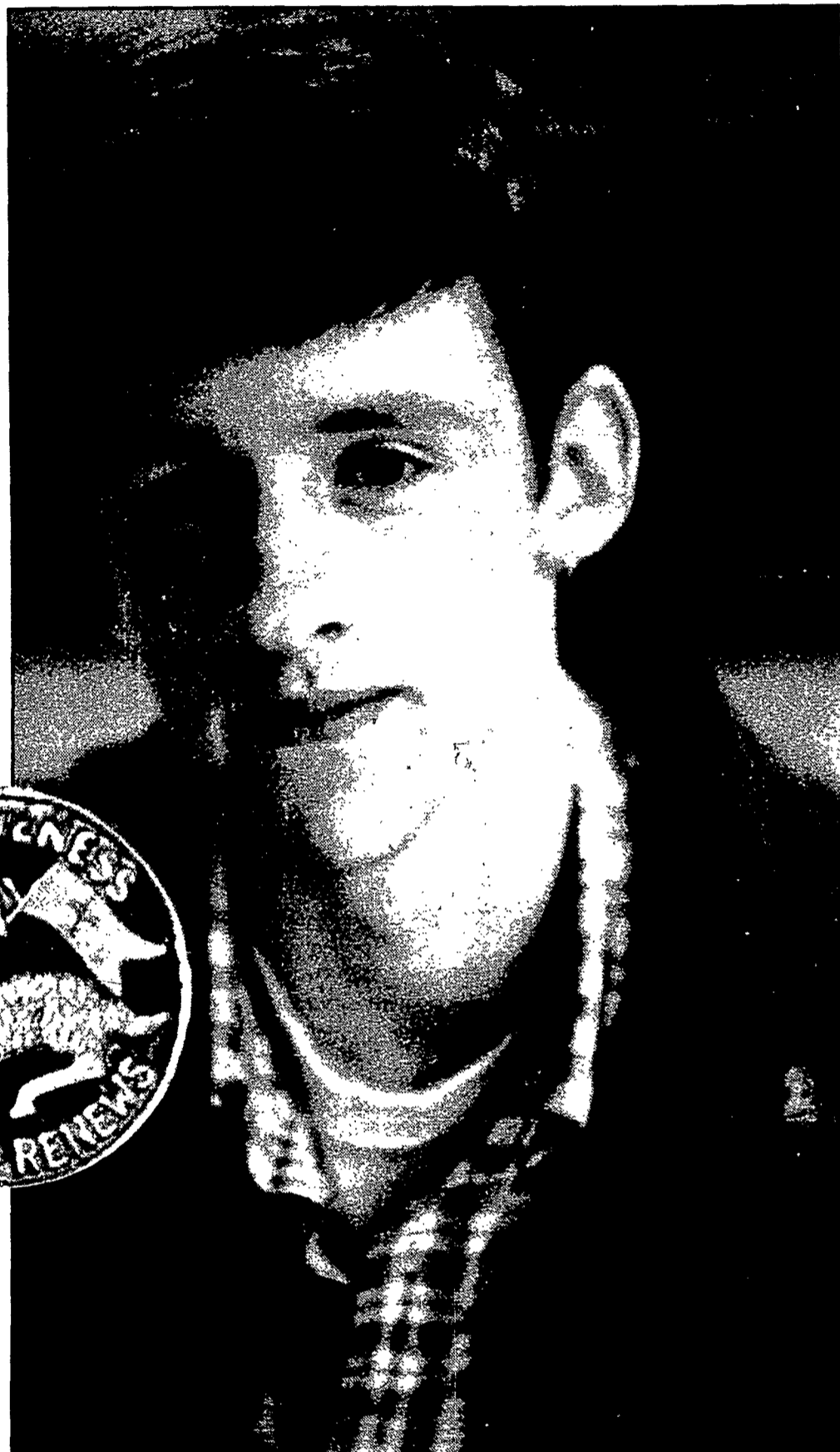
Mike pointed out that the average person needs a cooling-down period before being able to grant forgiveness.

"I don't think it should be accepted immediately, or given immediately," Mike commented.

Sarah agreed, saying that God understands our natural emotions. "I don't think he expects anyone to forgive instantly," she commented.

However, Sarah offered a little food for thought: the potential damage of holding onto long-term grudges.

"If one day you decide 'I should give that person a call,' they could be dead - or have dropped off the face of the earth and you never find them," Sarah said. "They'll never know you'd forgiven them; they'll never feel fully healed. They'll always feel the wound."



Mike Shannon of St. John of Rochester Parish, Perinton, wears a pin that proclaims his belief in forgiveness.

**Coming next week:
Getting touchy-feely
during Mass**

**What kind of
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Are you curious?

Thursday, May 1, 7:30pm-9pm
Kenneth Cauthen
Theologian and Professor Emeritus at the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, Dr. Kenneth Cauthen will discuss and sign his recently published book, *The Many Faces of Evil: Reflections on the Sinful, the Tragic, the Demonic, and the Ambiguous.*

Sunday, May 11, 2:30-3:30pm
Relic, Icon or Hoax?
Harry Gove, Professor Emeritus of Physics at the University of Rochester, will discuss and sign his book *Relic, Icon or Hoax? Dating the Turin Shroud.*

Saturday, May 17, 2:30pm-3:30pm
Beatrice Ganley
Sister Beatrice Ganley of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester will discuss and sign her book of memoirs, *Sea of Connection.*

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