

On the MOVE

BATTLE WITH WOMEN ARE TOO EMOTIVE

Story By Mike Latona

Name: Mike Meyers. Date: May 2, 1997. Destination: Diocesan youth retreat in Livonia. Problem: Car in front proceeding slowly and erratically. Quick conclusion by Mike's brother: Women don't know how to drive.

Humbling fact: The driver in question was a man, not a woman.

The incident illustrates a longstanding stereotype — that women are not as adept behind the wheel as men, despite insurance company statistics that show men are more likely to be involved in accidents than women.

Many teens said they are troubled by such sexist stereotypes, and other aspects of sexism.

And Melissa Kozakiewicz and her brother Brian, 14, said they believe that women are victims of sexism more often than men.

The definition of sexism in Webster's New World Dictionary seems to support their assertion: "Discrimination of people based on sex; specifically, discrimination against, and prejudicial stereotyping of women."

On the one hand, Mike said, the stereotype about female drivers "has no basis in fact." On the other, such a

MEN ARE IMMATURE.

perception continues.

"You could see one woman driving bad and 10 women driving good, and we will remember the one driving bad. Society is based like that, that men are better (at driving) than women," said Mike, 15, a parishioner at St. John the Evangelist Church in Spencerport.

Melissa and Mitchell Ball agreed that the driving stereotype is a common example of sexism.

"I work at an insurance company, and I know that's not true. It is so stupid," stated Melissa, 18, from St. John the Evangelist Church in Greece.

"That's completely unfair. Men are horrible drivers. They take more risks, I believe," added Mitchell, 16, from the Catholic Communities of St. Anne and St. Gregory in Palmyra and Marion.

Such stereotypes, Melissa said, "show me that people are not even open-minded or intelligent enough" to

explore the truth of their convictions about men and women.

"If you're going to make a sexist remark, you'd better be able to back it up with fact," remarked Melissa, who plans to major in women's studies at the University of Buffalo beginning this fall.

A leading perpetrator of sexism, Melissa charged, is the Roman Catholic Church. Although she said the church has become more inclusive in recent decades by making such ministerial roles as eucharistic ministers available to women, she wondered why the priesthood is still unavailable to females.

"What does that say to our children? That women are not as holy, not as intelligent? What are we trying to say?" Melissa remarked.

Mike recalled the controversy at his Spencerport parish a couple of years ago when female altar servers were introduced. This action followed Pope John Paul II's 1994 announcement that female altar servers can be permitted.

"A lot of the guy altar servers said, 'Oh great. Why do they have to be doing this now?' That was a big step, but I

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Upcoming Supplements

CATHOLIC ORGANIZATIONS

Publication Date: September 18 - Deadline: September 4

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Publication Date: October 16 - Deadline: October 2

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