

by Mike Latona Photos by Greg Francis

Teacher sees tomorrow's church in her peers

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — As far as Julie Keane, 23, is concerned, a young adult's Catholic faith travels a two-way street.

From one end, she envisions the church moving out to young adults by inviting them to serve in such areas of leadership as parish pastoral councils. And she sees pastors making sure to mention young adults, particularly singles, in their homilies.

On the other end, young adults shouldn't wait and complain about being neglected by the church, she said. They should walk up and make their presence known in their parishes.

"If they don't get involved now, there's not going to be that future generation to keep the church alive," Keane said of young adults.

A native of Sligo, Ireland, Keane has lived in the United States since she was 2. She embodies many of the qualities young adult Catholics need to bring to the church, according to Karen Rinefierd, coordinator of Odyssey, the diocesan-sponsored young adult network.

"She's made many exciting contributions to Odyssey," Rinefierd said of Keane, who serves on the network's planning committee. "She's really raised the issue of how young adults can mentor younger Catholics."

Keane is one of several young adults on the committee who have volunteered to go to colleges in the diocese and talk about young adult ministry, Rinefierd said. Keane said Odyssey recently sent out letters to area campus ministers offering its Odyssey members as volunteers to talk to groups of students.

"I would have loved something like that when I was in college," said Keane, who attended Niagara University where she obtained a bachelor's degree in education.

Keane said college students need to know that the church will care about them after college, even if they're not married and raising children.

Keane herself is single, and she teaches seventh and eighth grade at Sacred Heart School in Rochester. She said she gets a kick out of watching her students blossom intellectually under her tutelage.

"It's just amazing to watch them," she said. "You're not all of the reason, but you are part of the reason they learn." She added that she has grown to appreciate teaching at a Catholic school over the two years she's been at Sacred Heart.

"Honestly, it started out as a job," she said of her position. "But once I was there, I really appreciated what they were trying to teach the children."

The school promotes such activities as daily class prayer and occasional service projects at area soup kitchens, practices



Julie Keane, Sacred Heart School seventh- and eighth-grade science teacher, reviews a lesson with eighth-grader Lorne Brooks Feb. 12.

Greg Francis/Staff photographer

that instill a reverence for others, she said.

A parishioner at Blessed Sacrament Church, 534 Oxford St., Keane added that she puts a premium on living out the church's teachings on love and forgiveness. Like her students learning how to serve others through service projects, she wants to learn how to live her faith in practical ways.

"I think it's more important for people to know you're Catholic by example, than just by knowing you're Catholic," she said.

However, she stressed that young adults shouldn't neglect such duties as regular prayer and Sunday Mass.

"I think you need that structured time to keep your connection to God, to know what it is you're living out," she said.

If you know of a young adult in your parish or faith community who could be featured in the Catholic Courier's Young Adult page, call Rob Cullivan at 716/328-4340, or 1-800-600-3628.

Upcoming events

Phone numbers listed for the following events are all in the 716 area code.

Andy Nahas and friends will perform a benefit concert for the Open Door Mission, a homeless shelter, at Covenant United Methodist Church, 1124 Culver Road, Rochester, on Sunday, March 8, at 4 p.m. Admission is \$10 general; \$5 students and senior citizens; and free for children under 10. Call 232-4233.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will speak on "The Pastoral Use of Authority" on Monday, March 16, at 8 p.m. in the Interfaith Chapel at the University of Rochester. His talk is sponsored by the Newman Community. Call Father Gary Tyman at 275-4322.

As part of St. Bernard Institute's "On The Road" series, Father John Colacino, CPPS, will speak on Wednesday, March 25, about "What do we long for?" at 7 p.m. in Corpus Christi Church, 864 E. Main St., Rochester. Young adults are invited to meet in the church foyer beforehand, and go out as a group afterward. Call Mike at 723-1191.

All of the following events have been scheduled by Odyssey, the diocesan-sponsored young adults network. For Odyssey information, call 1-800-388-7177, ext. 255.

• Tuesday, March 10: Teams of eight-10 people are needed to work at Blessed Sacrament Church's soup kitchen between 4 and 5 p.m., and 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Odyssey is also planning similar volunteer nights on Tuesday, April 21, and Tuesday, June 2. Info: Tracy McCabe at 716/473-5328 or Cathy Daniels at 477-8716.

• Saturday, March 21: Crossroads Retreat Day from 9:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. at Onanda Park, Canandaigua, Ontario County. The \$15 cost covers breakfast and lunch. Up to 45 participants may stay until Sunday morning, March 22, for free, but if you stay over, bring breakfast food to share. Info: Karen Rinefierd at 328-328-3228, ext. 255.

• Friday, March 27: Young adults will meet at 7:15 p.m. in Holy Cross Church, 4492 Lake Ave., Rochester, for Stations of the Cross. For information, call Micaela Gutierrez at 325-4456.

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