

on the MOVE

Evangelizing

Bible in 50 words

God made
 Adam bit
 Noah arked
 Abraham split
 Joseph ruled
 Jacob fooled
 Bush talked
 Moses balked
 Pharaoh plagued
 People walked
 Sea divided
 Tablets Guided
 Promise landed

Saul freaked
 David peeked
 Prophets warned
 Jesus born
 God walked
 Love talked
 Anger crucified
 Hope died
 Love rose
 Spirit flamed
 Word spread
 God remained.

by e-mail

Story by Mike Latona

Every now and then, you may hear about evils of the Internet: pornography, satanic chat rooms, etc. Yet how often do you hear about the good of going on-line?

Web sites and e-mails are abundant with material concerning the Bible, prayer and pro-life issues, as well as stories of love, faith and compassion. Many e-mails implore the reader to pass the message on to a friend. Others remind the reader to tell someone you love him or her, or do a kind act, before it's too late.

Elissa Maltzan and Margaret Marisa are among the diocesan teens who believe that on-line spiritual messages enhance one's faith.

"Receiving them from others boosts my day and helps me to focus," said Elissa, 17, a parishioner at St. James Church in Irondequoit. "A story that calls forth emotions in words an ordinary person can understand is often the best way to reach out to people. The story doesn't need to be long, only sufficient to get the point across."

"These e-mails force people to spend more than one hour a week thinking about their religion," said Margaret, 18, from Immaculate Conception Church in Ithaca.

One of Margaret's personal favorites is an e-mail titled "FUNNY, ISN'T IT?" - a biting look at our priorities regarding worship. It says, in part:

"Funny how \$100 looks so big when you take it to church, but so small when you take it to the mall ... Funny how long a couple hours spent at church are, but how short they are when watching a movie ... Funny how people want to get a front seat at any game or concert, but scramble to get a back seat at church services."

That e-mail, Margaret said, "forces the readers to look at their own life, and see how they treat religion in their lives." They also are forced to see "that they may not really put God first, but instead put today's society first," she said.

Margaret said she both receives and sends spiritual e-mails, saying that forwarding them "results in passing the word of God along to others." Elissa, also, sees the Internet as a great chance to evangelize.

"I get kind of nervous about sending

them sometimes," Elissa said. "I send them to people who I don't know if they are Christians, or I know who are not. I don't want them to be mad at me. But no complaints yet!"

"I feel like I am REALLY doing God's work by reaching out to other people and trying to lead them to God," she added. "Or, offering support to other Christians who may be feeling down and alone in this world of non-believers. It can really get tough, and I love reaching out and offering my support."

Elissa noted that she recently added her name to an e-mail list - totaling in the hundreds - of young people who have pledged never to drink and drive. Elissa said she hasn't originated any of her own e-mails, but that she might someday "write a poem about my personal experiences with God and forward that to other people."

Mary Ann Giacona, a youth-ministry volunteer at diocesan events and in the Auburn area, said that her children Nico, 16, and Maria, 14, "have a whole group of kids they interact with" by e-mail.

"Their faith grows more and more," said Giacona, from Sacred Heart Church in Auburn. "More kids are depending on this. It's their stronghold, their rock. The Internet makes it easy to share their faith; it's really a wonderful thing."

Giacona gets into the

act as well. For instance, she recently circulated an e-mail regarding a hunger-awareness Web site, www.thehungersite.com. Those who visit the site will find that by clicking a certain button, food donated by corporate sponsors will automatically be donated to stop world hunger.

Giacona also recommends a Web site for those who like stories in the "Chicken Soup" mold: www.heartwarmers4u.com. The site not only offers inspirational stories, but also allows for e-mail interchange and feedback.

Whatever the source, Giacona said that sending and receiving such messages always seems to provide an important reminder, or spiritual boost.

"Sometimes I feel like you get just what you needed for that day," she remarked.

**COMING NEXT WEEK:
Some serious debate**

