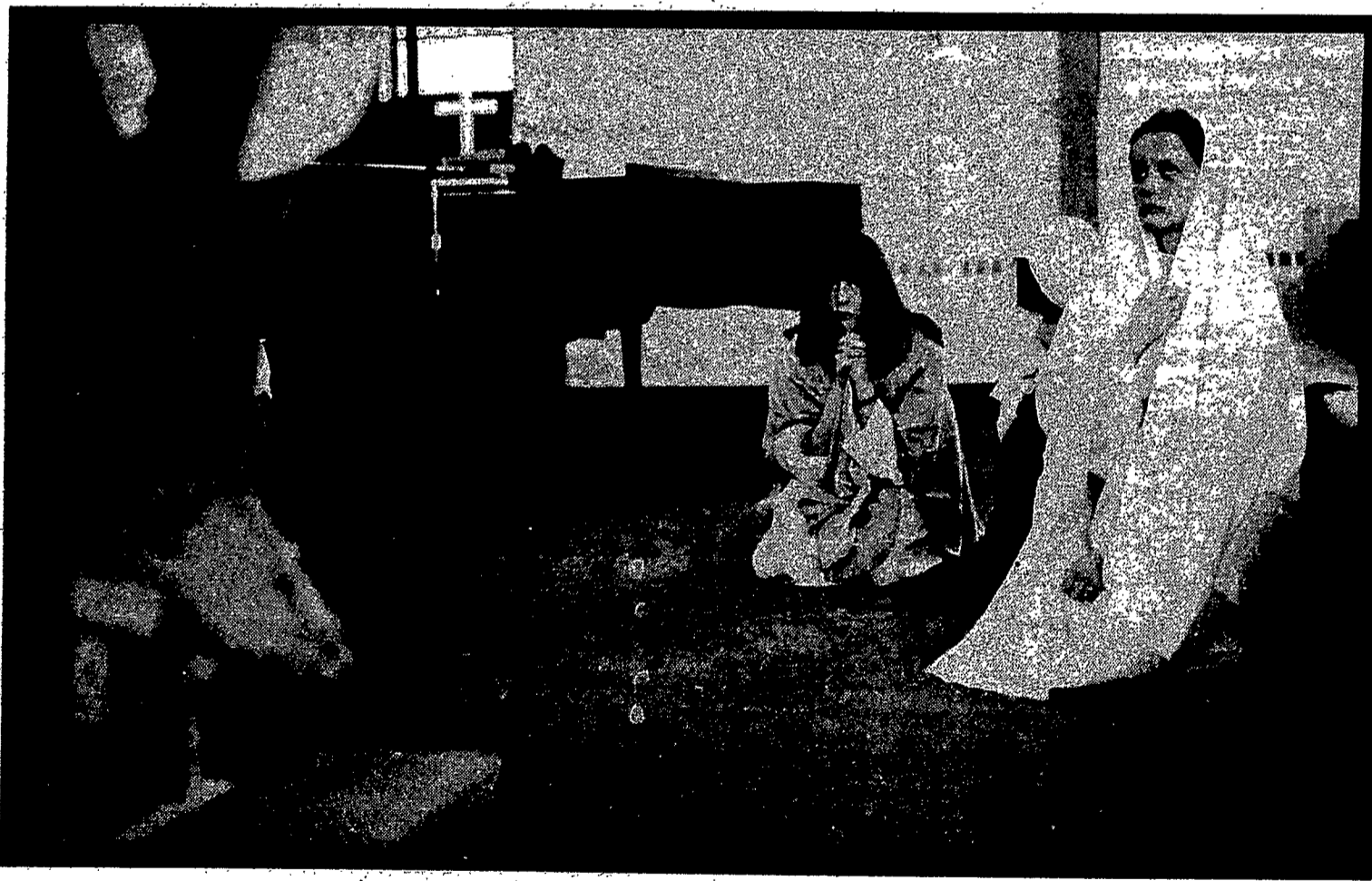




Jesus (Tom) is comforted by his mother (Anna Augustick, 17) during Living Stations at St. Francis of Assisi Church in Auburn on April 14.



From right, Anna, as Mary; Atira Hepworth, 13, as Mary Magdalene; and Jen Carnicelli, 17, as Veronica, mourn Jesus' suffering and death during Living Stations at St. Francis of Assisi in Auburn.

Cross, enhanced their "understanding of the pain Jesus and his mother went through" and gained "a better appreciation of how the faith was built."

Jacqueline Gove, 12, played Mary Magdalene in the St. Alphonsus presentation. "She was by Mary's side the whole time and was there to comfort her," Jacqueline said.

By playing that part, Jacqueline said, "I really felt like I was there. It was emotional, seeing (the Jesus character) really crucified. When he died (in the Living Stations), it really

made an impact on me."

Meanwhile, Holy Family's Dave Pike, 14, is in his third year of doing the Living Stations.

"I've learned deeper things about how the Stations went," Dave said.

Dave's twin brother, Dan, is a third-year Living Stations participant at Holy Family as well. Although he's enjoyed portraying such various biblical figures as a centurion and Simon Peter, Dan has had mixed feelings about depicting Pontius Pilate.

"He condemned Jesus to death, so

it kind of felt strange," Dan remarked.

Dan and his brother are among 10 young Holy Family parishioners taking part in this year's Living Stations. This is the 13th year that parish youths have presented Living Stations, and attendance has increased every year, according to Adelaide Hutson, Holy Family's coordinator of religious education and youth ministry. Participants are generally in grades six through eight.

Meanwhile, the Living Stations at St. Hyacinth and St. Francis of Assisi were a first-time effort. According to

David, the director, the ensemble featured nine youths representing both parishes.

"Sometimes when we were shorthanded, we were playing three parts (during rehearsal)," remarked Tom, the Jesus portrayeur.

The St. Hyacinth/St. Francis teens made their own costumes and bought their own materials and props, including wood for a cross. The St. Hyacinth adult choir helped the youth by singing at both Living Stations. In addition, group members collected about \$150 in donations, even though they hadn't asked for any money. They decided to forward the funds to a local church, First Love Ministry, that was recently damaged by fire.

"I think it was more significant that it wasn't a Catholic church — the ecumenical effort," said Sister Nancy Emerick, OSF, faith formation director at St. Francis of Assisi.

Tom, 19, is in the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) process at St. Francis of Assisi, and will be received into the Catholic Church at the April 22 Easter Vigil Mass. He explained how he became involved in the Living Stations.

"(Sister Emerick) asked me if I wanted to be in it and I said 'Sure.' But I had no idea I was going to play Jesus," Tom remarked. He added that his girlfriend, Jen Carnicelli, 17, was also a member of the Living Stations group.

Saying that he's "not the kind to get serious," Tom nonetheless totally immersed himself in his role.

"I think it felt good," he concluded

COMING NEXT WEEK:

Aquinas Holocaust project