

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Bradbury-Haehl leaving to serve Webster parish

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

Nora Bradbury-Haehl, coordinator of young-adult ministry for the Diocese of Rochester, will leave her position July 31 to become youth minister at St. Paul's Parish in Webster on Aug. 1.

A veteran youth minister, Bradbury-Haehl has served in youth-ministry programs at parishes in Rochester, Penfield and Fairport since 1987. She has also authored two Scripture-study books for youth-ministry leaders and groups.

Bradbury-Haehl has served in her current position since August 2000, and said she was leaving because she wanted to have more flexibility in scheduling time around her family. She and her husband, Gregory Haehl, have four children: Monica, 12; Gregory, 10; Catherine, 5; and Jonathan, 2. They reside in Penfield.

"It'll be full-time, but closer to home and less travel," she said of her new position.

The diocese will seek to replace her, she said, and is currently putting together a job description.

In her two years overseeing diocesan young-adult ministry, Bradbury-Haehl, 34, pioneered such monthly young-adult discussion programs as Catholic Coffeehouse at St. John Fisher College and Theology On Tap at Johnny's Irish Pub (Johnny's Smoke Free), both located in Rochester. Theology on Tap, in particular, became popular with Catholic young adults who met in a room off the tavern's main area to discuss such issues as Catholic just war theory and reasons to

be Catholic in the modern world.

"I just needed a place to go to legitimize my drinking," Bradbury-Haehl said with a chuckle, quickly adding that she only has about two beers a year.

On a more serious note, Bradbury-Haehl said the discussion sessions were inspired by a similar program in the Chicago archdiocese.

"One of the things I knew from youth ministry is you need to be in a place where young people feel comfortable," she said. "You either go to that place or create that climate. Young adults need a place where they can wrestle with the inconsistencies they see in their church and in their own lives."

Bradbury-Haehl also promoted two retreat programs for young adults: Seekers, for Catholics ages 18-25, and Sowers, for Catholics in their 20s and 30s. The Seekers retreats were aimed at those in early adulthood who were looking for spiritual answers, and the Sowers retreats were designed for older adults who wanted to apply what they learned about spirituality to their lives, she said.

She added that she admires the fact that the diocese considers young-adult ministry a priority.

"I will say that there's still a crying need for young-adult ministry in this diocese, and that this diocese is very committed to young-adult ministry," she said. "Young adults are a deeply spiritual group, but wouldn't necessarily identify themselves as religious, and if the church is to minister to them, the church needs to understand that."

In practical terms, she said, the church



Karin von Voigtlander/Staff photographer

Nora Bradbury-Haehl, coordinator of young-adult ministry for the Diocese of Rochester, pauses for a photo July 2. She will leave her Pastoral Center desk July 31 to become the youth minister at St. Paul's Parish in Webster.

must develop means and methods of helping young adults deal with such issues as workplace morality and explaining the meaning behind the church's sometimes mysterious rituals.

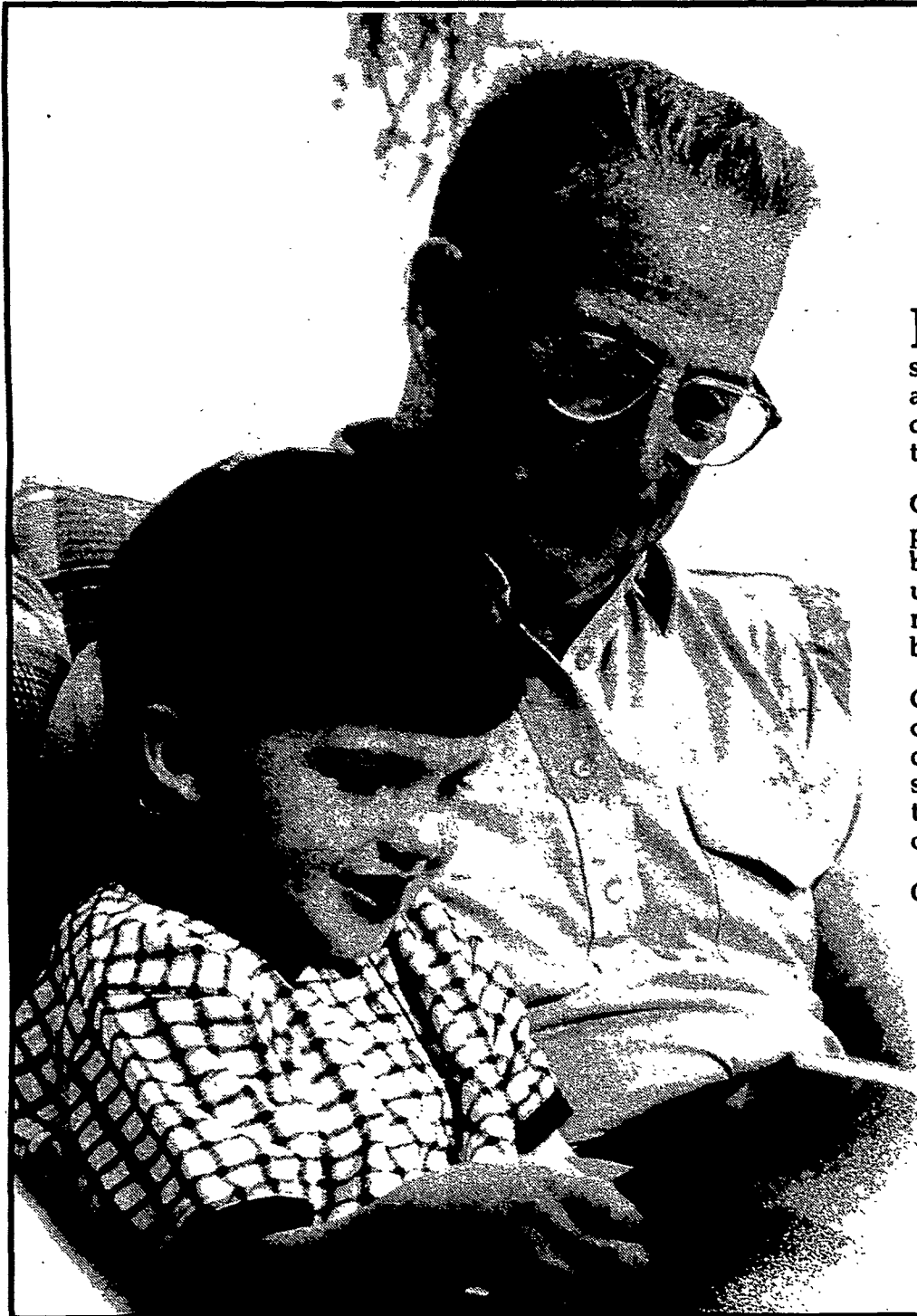
"Authenticity is very important to young adults, and if it doesn't mean anything, why do it?" she asked rhetorically.

Bradbury-Haehl also worked on such teen-oriented programs as SALT - Service Action Learning Teams - which introduced suburban and rural youths to inner-city Catholic ministry efforts in such agencies as the House of Mercy, an independent outreach center in Rochester run by Mercy Sister Grace Miller. The SALT program was designed to give high school juniors and seniors practical experience in living out the church's social-justice teachings, she said, noting that Catholic teenagers helped House of Mercy staff at a summer day camp for children.

And, as her last major act in her current position, Bradbury-Haehl will accompany several dozen diocesan young adults to Toronto for World Youth Day July 22-28. The international event is expected to draw hundreds of thousands of people, and will be highlighted by a visit from Pope John Paul II.

Bradbury-Haehl concluded that she welcomed the opportunity to step away from parish ministry for a couple of years and see the broader picture of church ministry at the diocesan level.

"One of the things I loved about being here is seeing the church of Rochester in a whole different way," she said, listing such ministries as catechesis and urban programs among the efforts undertaken by diocesan staff members. "There's all these good works being done in our diocese by wonderful, faith-filled people."



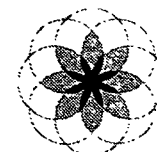
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