

# Vocations push set in Tompkins

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

ITHACA — Many opportunities exist for promoting vocations, but Carolann Darling isn't sure how much folks in her neck of the woods know about them.

"I got to thinking, what exactly are we doing to promote vocations? I don't hear a lot of promotions," said Darling, who serves as volunteer youth minister at St. Anthony Parish in Groton.

Darling shared her feelings with fellow members of the Tompkins County regional planning group. Out of those talks emerged a vocations-awareness program that will rotate to each Tompkins parish on upcoming weekends. The project is being

coordinated by Darling; Mercy Sister Edna Slyck, pastoral associate at Immaculate Conception in Ithaca; and Barbara Ivers, religious-education coordinator at Holy Cross in Dryden.

Parish staff members will operate promotional tables after all Sunday Masses. The schedule is as follows:

Oct. 5-6 — Immaculate Conception, Ithaca, 4:30 p.m. Saturday and 8:30 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday.

Oct. 19-20 — St. Catherine of Siena, Ithaca, 5 p.m. Saturday and 11:30 a.m. Sunday.

Oct. 26-27 — Holy Cross, Dryden, 5:30 p.m. Saturday and 10:30 a.m. Sunday.

Nov. 2-3 — All Saints, Lansing, 5:30 p.m. Saturday and 9:45 a.m. Sunday.

Nov. 9-10 — St. Anthony, Groton, 4 p.m. Saturday and 8:30 a.m. Sunday.

These weekend sessions are being promoted to all Catholics, regardless of age or marital status. According to the organizers, they will provide informational literature regarding the diocesan priesthood, as well as religious orders of men and women — particularly the Sisters of Mercy and Sisters of St. Joseph, who have congregations based in this diocese.

But the list doesn't stop there. Information also will be available on the permanent diaconate, lay associate groups and St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry. Sister Slyck said that expanding vocations awareness into many areas is vital in an age of declining number of priests and women religious.

"We classified it as awareness of

## Thoughts to Consider



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the need for involvement of others in the pastoral life in the church," she said.

"I don't think adults really realize

they can be more involved," Ivers added. "We were feeling that people really just aren't aware, or they're casually aware of stuff. I think this is an attempt at an in-your-face kind of thing."

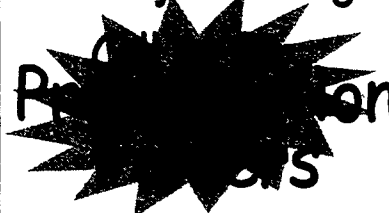
"It's going to be a 'show and tell,' not just a 'pray for' (vocations)," Sister Slyck remarked.

Because much of Tompkins County is rural, it's important to take a direct approach, Darling observed: "We're kind of remote out here; resources are limited. There's only one Catholic bookstore, at Immaculate Conception in Ithaca. So we want to bring the information to the people, the young people especially."

Patricia Finnerty, diocesan director of vocations awareness, commented that she's glad to see an initiative in that region that involves leadership by lay parishioners.

"You can't leave it up to the priests and sisters. The parishioners have to take an active role," Finnerty said, noting that many diocesan parishes and planning groups are beginning to form vocations-awareness teams.

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