

# Teens, parents anticipate changes

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

LIVONIA — Seemingly almost overnight, a child is thrust into adulthood by graduating from high school and leaving home. The emotional shifts can be huge not only for the teen, but also for his or her parents.

To help ease these turbulent times, the Rochester Diocese offered a retreat for high-school seniors, "Moving On and Embracing the Future." It took place Nov. 16-17 at Camp Stella Maris, with 29 teens attending.

The program began with high-school seniors naming many of the symptoms of "senioritis," such as stress, confusion, laziness, frustration, separation and memories. The teens later heard from a panel of young adults who described their own experiences as seniors. An evening reconciliation service closed out the Saturday agenda.

On Sunday, participants' parents joined the retreat. First, seniors and their parents were told to stand under a sign that best described the weather conditions in their current relationship. Many hovered near the "partly sunny" sign; yet when told to look ahead to graduation time, the "high winds" and "thunderstorms" areas filled up. Then, for the period following the transition of leaving home, sunnier weather returned to the parents' and teens' forecasts.

Next came a game where parents' and teens' knowledge of each other was tested by answering such questions as, What is the parent's favorite restaurant? What is the senior's favorite food that he/she likes to cook? What personality trait has the senior acquired from his/her parent? What



Jason Reerick/Catholic Courier

Father Gennaro Ventura (left) of the Holy Family Catholic Community, Eric Heaton of St. Patrick in Owego and Gretchen Breskewski of Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Brockport clasp hands during the retreat's closing Mass.

is the family's most challenging event in the next year? Points were accrued when answers matched.

Andrew Wieszczyk, 17, cheerfully declared "we failed miserably," on the final score, claiming his father, Ron, had misled him. "He said, 'This is the best restaurant, the Golden

Fox Diner' so I started going there with my friends. Then he writes down Bathub Billy's!" said Andrew, whose family attends Christ the King Parish in Irondequoit.

Later on Sunday, retreatants and parents reviewed a handout titled "50 Ways to Leave Your Mother," which contained such tips as knowing how to clean a bathroom; learning where the nearest hospital is; making a monthly budget (and stick-

ing to it); observing caution in relationships and around alcohol; and staying in touch with family and friends. Closing out the retreat was a Mass celebrated by Father Gennaro "Ace" Ventura, presented jointly with the Awakening Faith retreat for grades 9-10, which also took place that weekend.

"Moving On ... " was a first-time initiative by the Rochester Diocese. It got a thumbs-up from Andrew Wieszczyk, who said it presented a good chance to bond with his dad. Meanwhile, Ron Wieszczyk said the retreat offered good food for thought, saying, "If you think about things before they happen, then when they happen it's not such a shock to the system."

Cindi Sands, who participated in the retreat along with her son Chris, 17, said the retreat pointed out that children must eventually live their own lives. "Now you know you're in the last phase of this stage of your relationship," said Sands, whose family is from St. Jude's Parish in Gates.

Sarah Storms, 17, of St. Pius V, Cochocton, was joined at the retreat by her mother, Barbara. The oldest of three children, Sarah said the retreat reminded her that she's not the only one who will cope with change once she begins college next fall.

"I've learned my parents are going through a rough time, not just me," she said.

For Women Who Make a Difference!

## At Mercy, the door is always open.

Explore enrollment at Our Lady of Mercy High School. Discover our long tradition of excellence in helping young women reach their potential by fostering intellectual and social development, physical and spiritual growth, independence and vision.

Join us at Mercy...for women who make a difference!



**Our Lady  
of Mercy**  
Grades 7-12

A Ministry of the Sisters of Mercy

1437 Blossom Rd., Rochester  
For more information call  
(585) 288-7120

**ENTRANCE EXAM**

December 7, 8:30 am  
Our Lady of Mercy High School