

# Creative youths decorate cathedral

Jennifer Burke/Catholic Courier

PENN YAN — On a blustery March day, seven teens from Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Community's junior-high youth group met in a garage to paint a large piece of plywood. They are among many other diocesan youth-group members and Catholic-school students who are creating colorful art to adorn the construction fence surrounding Rochester's Sacred Heart Cathedral.

In January, Father John Mulligan, Sacred Heart's pastor, called upon diocesan youths to be a part of the cathedral's renovation by painting 4-by-8-foot plywood panels to be placed on the fence. The panels should be colorful and creative, depict local scenes and indicate what parish they are from, he said.

The panel decorated by Our Lady of the Lakes' youth group depicts an angel spreading her wings above the sun, which is rising over the Finger Lakes. Stars, the moon, a cross, a dove and a chalice are also depicted.

"We just decided what we were going to draw and each person did a part," said Stephen Groom, 14, as he painted green ivy on his brown cross.

The garage was quieter than normal for a room full of teenagers as the youth-group members worked, occasionally talking about the school play, French class and what color to paint the host, which was above the chalice.

In January the teens decided to take part in the project and were excited about the endeavor, said Jen Mosich, who leads the newly formed youth group. After brainstorming and drafting their ideas on paper, the teens sketched their final design onto the plywood at the end of February, she said, and hope to complete the panel by the end of March.

The youth group at Elmira's Our Lady of Lourdes Parish also participated in the project and finished their panel in February. At least 20



Eric Sucar/Catholic Courier

Twelve-year old Alice Swarhout, a member of Our Lady of the Lakes Catholic Community's junior-high youth group, paints local scenes March 21 on a plywood panel that will adorn the construction fence at Rochester's Sacred Heart Cathedral.

teens helped paint the board, which looked almost tie-dyed when they were done, said Rosemary Anthony, the youth-group leader.

"I wanted them all to make sure that they did something. If they didn't feel artistic, they could do splatter paint," said Anthony, who was pleased with the finished product because she feels it represents the teens. "Mostly, it's like they are. It's straight, but it's exceptionally colorful, and that's exactly what they are. They're direct, they're upfront, they're talented, they're colorful."

After they were done making the board colorful, the teens painted the name of the parish across it and added flowers, stars and a cross, said youth-group member Sarah Norton, 16.

"Everybody brought different kinds of paint and paint brushes," Sarah said. "We really didn't plan out

how to paint the wood; we just started to paint. It was really fun. In the end, it looked like a blob of colors. It really seemed like something from the '60s to me."

The teens were excited that they had been asked to be a part of the cathedral renovation, Anthony said, adding that it helped make them feel important and like they were part of the diocese as a whole. After finishing and delivering the panel, the teens received a letter of thanks from Father Mulligan. Hearing that positive feedback motivated them to

continue doing similar projects, Anthony said.

"We were just really excited to do it," said Jamie Miller, 17. "We all really just jumped at the idea and all got brushes and started different designs. We all just got together and did our own little thing and it turned out to be great."

Members of the youth group at Irondequoit's Christ the King Parish also decorated a panel, according to Paul Anastasi, youth minister. Volunteer Patty Sheridan, who is also an art teacher, helped the teens, and the panel has symbols representing Irondequoit, the parish, the priests and other important aspects of the parish.

The finished panel will be on display in the back of church April 18-25, during which time parishioners will have the opportunity to sign the board. On April 25, it will be taken to the cathedral in a ceremonial procession, Anastasi said.

"We're all pretty proud of it," he said. "Our youth group designed and did it, and then any parishioners that want to can sign it. This is our church, we're all a part of it."

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