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# Faith & Family

CATHOLIC COURIER

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK ■ NOVEMBER 2004 ■ www.catholiccourier.com ■ 20 PAGES ■ B SECTION



## A time for giving thanks

### Catholics mark their good fortune by helping others

Each Thanksgiving morning, Carol Schoen and her daughter, Sarah Zedick, faithfully arrive at St. Peter's Kitchen, ready to serve a warm Thanksgiving meal to the needy of Rochester. This tradition began six years ago, when Schoen and Zedick were looking for a new way to celebrate the holiday.

"We tried a couple other places, and St. Peter's just felt right; it just felt good," Schoen said.

Schoen and Zedick don't consider it a sacrifice to spend a portion of their day serving others.

"It's like the old saying, 'You get more than you give.' There are certain things I will never forget," Schoen said.

One memory relates to a couple with several children who came to the kitchen for a Thanksgiving meal. Bottled water had been placed at each table, and one of the children reached out to take a bottle.

When the child's father told him not to touch the bottle, Schoen was at first touched, thinking that the father wanted his child to drink something more nutritious than water, such as juice or milk. When the father packed up the water bottles and took them home after the meal, she realized he wanted to save them for later use.

"All the sudden it just smacks you with reality. There's some really tough situations right here in Rochester; you don't have to go to another country to help others," Schoen said. "You just come away with such a dose of reality and how very, very fortunate we are. We are so, so lucky, and we don't even know it."

Schoen and Zedick are just two of many people who volunteer at St. Peter's Kitchen around Thanksgiving and Christmas, according to Patricia Lorenzen, director. St. Peter's Kitchen is fortunate in that it has about 170 regular volunteers that work at the kitchen all year long, she said.

So many people volunteer around the holidays that none of the regular volun-

teers has to work there on Thanksgiving, Lorenzen added. While she can't identify one particular reason for the increased number of volunteers at the holidays, she thinks it has something to do with the spirit of thanksgiving present at that time of the year.

"There are probably as many reasons for people wanting to volunteer as there are volunteers. I think many people do it because they feel very blessed and they want to be able to give back in some way," Lorenzen said.

The holidays do tend to help people realize how fortunate they are, which often inspires a desire to give something back to the community, said Father Lance Gonyo, pastor of Church of the Epiphany in Sodus and its mission church, St. Rose of Lima in Sodus Point. Thanksgiving especially is a time for people to remember the blessings of family, friends and good health. Even the ability to live in a First-World nation is a blessing many take for granted, he added.

"I think we've been blessed in just so

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Story by Jennifer Burke