

Hands of Christ events honor 800

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you.

— John 13:14-15

They may not literally wash others' feet, but numerous teens in the diocese are striving to continue the example that Christ's hands have passed on to us.

Recognition for these youths' service efforts took place in the form of three Hands of Christ prayer services last month — Oct. 19 at Greece's Our Mother of Sorrows Church; Oct. 20 at Fairport's St. John of Rochester Church; and Oct. 23 at Horseheads' St. Mary Our Mother Church. Bishop Matthew H. Clark presided at each event, individually handing out a plaque to each honoree who attended.

Hands of Christ recognizes outstanding service by high-school seniors in their church, school and/or community. According to the diocesan Office of Youth Ministry, this year featured a record total of approximately 800 recipients. At the Oct. 19 service in Greece, Bishop Clark saluted the teens for their volunteerism that led to the awards.

"I can't tell you how grateful all of us are to you," the bishop said. "We thank you for the powerful witness of your faith, your compassion for others."

A good example of this dedication is Hands of Christ recipient Margaret George, 17, from All Saints Parish in Lansing, Tompkins County. For the past three years, she has served regularly as usher at the 5:30 p.m. Saturday Mass. Margaret assists the parish as an extraordinary minister of holy Communion, lector and musician as well.

"Our church has a really good sense of community, and I just wanted to be a part of it," said Margaret, who was also lauded for encouraging her non-Catholic friends to attend Mass at All Saints.

Kevin Timms, 17, is another teen who's highly active in his parish, St. Bridget/St. Joseph in East Bloomfield, Ontario County. He led prayer at a parish Lenten service earlier this year, and is due to make his lecturing debut in December.

Yet one of Kevin's most notable service efforts will benefit the community at large while also paying a loving tribute to a recently deceased

Youth

parent.

Kevin's father, Thomas, died this past summer due to complications from heart surgery—he had in the spring. Kevin said that during his dad's illness, it became apparent to him how much blood was needed by doctors in order to keep his dad alive. Therefore, Kevin has decided to stage a blood drive to honor his dad while supporting the ongoing need for blood donations. The drive will take place Saturday, Nov. 20; from 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Canandaigua YMCA, 32 N. Main St., Canandaigua.

Although the blood drive is one of Kevin's numerous service initiatives, he plunges into these projects with no complaints.

"The point of life to help everyone else, to make their lives just a little bit better," he remarked.

Making others' lives better may require significant sacrifice along the way, observed Hands of Christ recipient Jesse Malgieri, 17, during a youth witness he gave at the Oct. 19 service.

The McQuaid Jesuit High School senior described a cathedral in Germany that was destroyed during World War II; all that remained standing was a statue of Christ with its arms outstretched. After a search through the rubble, Christ's hands were found intact and reattached to the statue.

Jesse, a parishioner of St. John the Evangelist (Humboldt Street) in Rochester, concluded that God may give us a cross to carry in our life of service to others, but that we must "climb out of the rubble and say we love God with our whole heart, our whole soul and our whole mind," he told the overflow crowd of recipients, family members and friends.

The chance to celebrate this love, and the good works that result from it, make Hands of Christ an immensely popular annual observance throughout the diocese.

"I felt really good, proud of myself that people nominated me," Margaret said.

Kevin, for one, found extra-special meaning in his Hands of Christ honor.

"I'm sure my dad would have been proud. He had been a Catholic who always went to church every Sunday, as I plan to do," Kevin stated.



Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

Mary Lynn Cala, a parishioner of Irondequoit's St. Margaret Mary Church, receives a Hands of Christ award Oct. 19 from Bishop Matthew H. Clark during a recognition service for high-school seniors at Greece's Our Mother of Sorrows Church.

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