

# Web initiative puts a focus on families

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

If you seek to ingrain your faith into family life, but don't know where to turn for quick guidance, a fairly new Web resource may be just the answer.

"Byways and Highways: Where Households Live Faithfully" can be accessed on the Diocese of Rochester's Web site at [www.dor.org/ec/family/](http://www.dor.org/ec/family/). The page, launched in September 2003, strives to extend the Sunday faith experience of Catholic families, according to Scott Rutan, the page's editor.

"It's the other six days a week that we begin to put that faith into practice," Rutan remarked.

This page provides "faith-formation information, stories and resources that families could use in their everyday life in the home setting," Rutan said. Although much of the content applies to traditional families, Rutan said that blended families, empty-nesters, widowers and young adults are also among the groups that can benefit from the Web page.

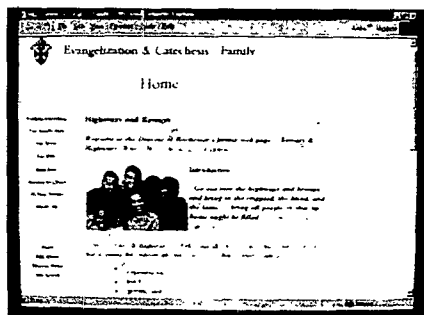
A primary feature in the October and November "Byways and Highways" was a two-part interview conducted by Rutan with Bishop Matthew H. Clark. The bishop shared his perspectives on family issues in a question-and-answer format.

Other recent "Byways and Highways" highlights included a segment on the United States bishops' document "Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility"; a reflection for teens on the art of listening; a word-scramble for youngsters; and a feature on the Mexican tradition of *Dia de Muertos* (Day of the Dead).

Reflections and features on "Byways and Highways" often cite well-known Catholic entities, with links included. Rutan said he designs content to be positive and inclusive, rather than to touch off debates.

"I try to use mainline sources, well-established publishing companies — resources that don't polarize, but talk about bringing together. You could potentially separate people, and I don't think we should do that. Families have enough tearing them apart," Rutan commented.

"Byways and Highways" is updated the first week of each month. Pre-



A Web resource for families, "Byways and Highways: Where Households Live Faithfully" is available on the Diocese of Rochester's Web site at [www.dor.org/ec/family/](http://www.dor.org/ec/family/).

vious editions are archived online for readers' convenience. Rutan arranges the copy and Joanne Church, a secretary in the diocesan Department of Evangelization and Catechesis, does the final updating. Rutan, a former departmental staff member, contracts with the diocese for "Byways and Highways." He also serves as coordinator of adult and family faith formation at St. Patrick's Parish in Victor, and is an independent catechetical consultant as well.

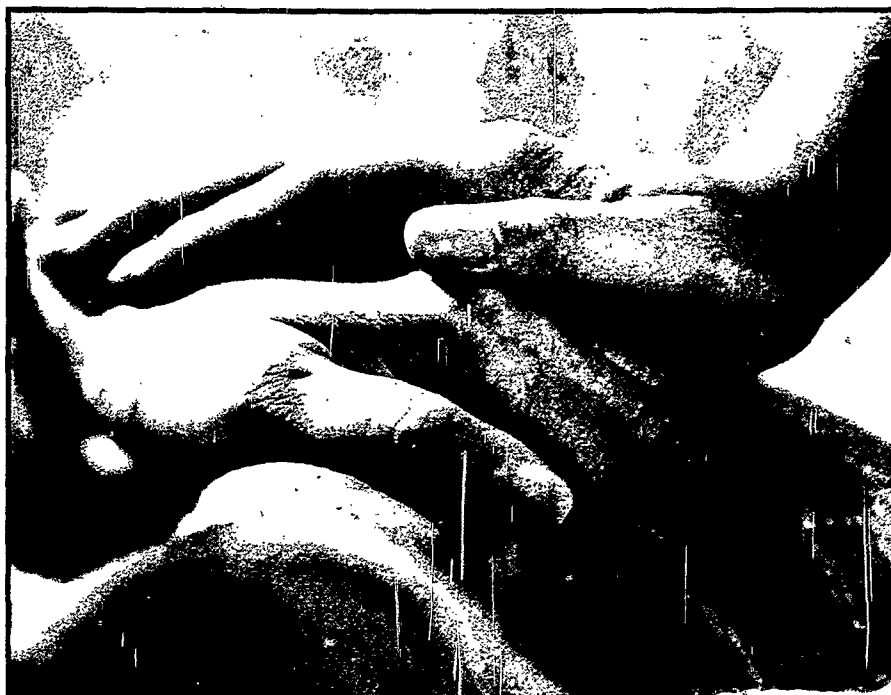
Rutan said he's hoping to expand participation from diocesan parishes in "Byways and Highways," featuring their family-related projects and events. Timely information should be sent to [Church@dor.org](mailto:Church@dor.org).

Another of Rutan's goals is to expand the Web page's "Around the Block" segment so that the diocese can learn about "the wealth of faith traditions — Caribbean and black Catholic, Mexican and European experiences from our many culturally diverse parishes," he said.

All feedback is welcomed. For instance, Rutan encourages parishes and families to write in on how they observe the Advent and Christmas seasons — "what do you do to celebrate and make these events holy?" he said.

Rutan is also hoping for more parishes to promote "Byways and Highways" as a valuable resource. Thus far, he said, the response has been quite positive.

"People have looked at the site and have really liked it," Rutan said. "Parishes are putting it in their bulletin and referring to it, which I think is a vote of confidence."



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