

Features

Auburn pastor's videotape draws appeal into television age

By Teresa A. Parsons

For those diocesan residents who have always wondered who actually works at the Pastoral Center and what exactly they do, this fall's series of regional meetings between diocesan and parish leaders of the Thanks Giving Appeal (TGA) would have proved a revelation.

Aside from the usual avalanche of graphs and fund-raising statistics with which parish leaders are usually inundated, this year's presentation included 15 minutes or so of Pastoral Center home movies.

Viewers caught Bishop Matthew H. Clark with collar undone and coffee cup in hand, heading out the door for Horseheads and a TGA meeting. They spied Father James Moynihan, diocesan TGA coordinator, lugging boxes down the halls, and they dropped into the subterranean domains of Mary Ellen FitzGibbons, audio-visual librarian, and Sister Kay Nicosia, SSJ, former assistant director of communications.

Confronted unexpectedly with a microphone and camera crew, each tried his or her best to answer a question buring in the minds of many diocesan Catholics at this time of year: "Where does TGA money go?"

Reviews of the tape, which was the brainchild of Auburn pastor Father Conrad Sundholm, were generally good, according to Father Moynihan. "The question everybody always asks is, 'What does the appeal do?'" he said. "What Father Sundholm tries to do is give a few examples by asking what we get for our appeal money. The answers he gets are very enlightening."

But Father Sundholm himself was disappointed with the results. When he loaned TGA leaders his videotape, he assumed that they

were planning either to have it professionally edited, or to make one of their own. Instead, the beginning and ending of the tape were simply dropped off to make it shorter.

The money spent to rent and transport a giant-screen television screen on which to show the tape, Father Sundholm noted, might have been better spent on having the footage professionally edited. "I was actually looking forward to how they would dress it up, and found out that they'd dressed it down," he said. "I wouldn't have shown that to my eight graders." Entitled "How Big is Your Church?" the tape was created for use at Holy Family and St. Aloysius parishes in Auburn during last year's Thanks Giving Appeal. Its purposes was to illustrate the links between the local, diocesan and universal levels of the Church.

The 40-minute video begins with picturesque shots of Auburn landmarks, and closes with scenes from the unveiling of the Statue of Liberty, Rome, and a blessing by Pope John Paul II.

In between is the diocesan portion of the program — the only part that was shown to Thanks Giving Appeal leaders. To record that segment, Father Sundholm drove to the diocesan Pastoral Center one day last September, and set out with videocamera in hand to interview everyone he could find. The topic of conversation was simply, "What do you do with money from the Thanks Giving Appeal?"

Father Sundholm said he asked diocesan Communications Office staff a week earlier to apprise pastoral center employees and administrators of his visit. However, the tape reveals that he caught most people by surprise.

Some subjects — most notably FitzGibbons, Maurice Tierney of the Division of Social

Ministry, and Sister Roberta Tierney, director of the Division of Education — gave little indication that they were caught off-guard. Others were rendered temporarily speechless.

While some people have praised the film for its spontaneity, Father Sundholm asserts that too many of the interviews lacked substantive information as a result. "Anyone watching that film would see that most people were totally in a state of shock," he said. "Extemporaneous is fine, but I think sometimes when things are prepared, they work out better."

Several of the TGA leaders who saw the tape said they found it informative, but agreed with Father Sundholm that it was in need of some polishing. Peter Nervina of St. Joseph's Parish in Weedsport observed that the transitions from one subject to the next were somewhat difficult to follow. "For what it showed, it was OK," he said.

On the other hand, Lucille Kaseman, TGA chairman at St. Boniface Parish, cautioned against too professional an approach. Overall, she rated the tape very good.

"It certainly helped people to understand a little more of what the TGA is all about," she said. "I don't really think people understand where the money is going or why it's so necessary to support all these agencies?"

For that very reason, Father Sundholm said, he has been urging TGA leaders to invest in some kind of visual presentation ever since the Thanks Giving Appeal was launched seven years ago. Some other dioceses, he pointed out, spend thousands of dollars on professionally produced slide presentations or films to promote their fund-raising campaigns. "Every year they said 'That's a good idea, but nothing happened,'" he recalled.

That is until last August, when Father Moynihan asked to borrow the videotape. Despite positive reactions to the concept of using videotape to explain the appeal, however, Father Moynihan said he would not be likely to support the funding of a more professional presentation in the near future — in part because he considers the tape's spontaneity an asset, and in part because of the cost of upgrading it.

Father Sundholm, a former diocesan development director, also parts company with TGA leaders over the issue of advance-gifts solicitation. Nearly five years ago, he introduced an advance-gifts component to his Auburn parishes' annual appeal campaign. Before the appeal formally begins, he invites what he terms "trend-setting" parishioners to the rectory for an extended discussion of diocesan needs. Before this year's appeal was even underway, advance pledges from parishioners at St. Aloysius and Holy Family added up to one-third of the parishes' total quota.

Diocesan TGA officials' wariness of the professional approach is understandable. They adopted similar tactics two years ago when a fund-raising consultant suggested that in advance of the appeal, selected donors should be invited to receptions with Bishop Clark. These gatherings — which nearly everyone referred to as "cocktail parties" — struck many people as insulting to donors of smaller sums, and a decline resulted in both the overall number of donors and the amount collected.

Father Sundholm believes that the key to success lies in the approach to such tactics. "Advance gifts are seen by some as elitist," he

Continued on Page 17



FUNERAL DIRECTORS

THOSE WHO WISH TO HAVE ARRANGEMENTS CARRIED OUT
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE IDEALS OF THEIR FAITH, CONTACT THE FUNERAL
DIRECTORS LISTED BELOW FOR PRE-NEED OR AT-NEED SERVICES AND COUNSELING.

ROCHESTER

Set your mind at ease, make FUNERAL arrangements with specialists.
at our home or in your home.

• NULTON

• ASHTON-SMITH

(716) 381-3900

• MATTLÉ

• PAYNE NULTON

ROCHESTER

Farrell-Ryan Funeral Home
Thomas W. Plumb & James J. Ryan
51 W. Ridge Rd.
Rochester, N.Y. 14615
(716) 254-3403

Schauman-Sulewski Funeral Home Inc.
Edwin Sulewski
2100 St. Paul Street
Rochester, N.Y. 14621
(716) 342-3400

Younglove-Smith Funeral Home, Inc.
Serving Greece
1511 Dewey Avenue
Rochester, N.Y. 14615
(716) 458-6200

IRONDEQUOIT

Burns-Hanna Funeral Home
1795 East Ridge Rd.
Rochester, N.Y. 14622
(716) 467-5745

Dreier-Giltner Funeral Home Inc.
Edward H. Dreier - Alan E. Giltner
1717 Portland Avenue
Rochester, N.Y. 14617
(716) 342-8500

Paul W. Harris Funeral Home Inc.
Richard P. Harris Charles E. Davis
570 Kings Highway S.
(corner Titus)
(716) 544-2041

IRONDEQUOIT

May Funeral Home
George L. May Jr., Raymond L. Welch
2793 Culver Rd.
Rochester, N.Y. 14622
(716) 467-7957

Schauman-Sulewski Funeral Home Inc.
Edwin Sulewski
2100 St. Paul Street
Rochester, N.Y. 14621
(716) 342-3400

Michael R. Yackiw Funeral Home
1270 Norton St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14621
(716) 544-5000
If no answer 342-9300

GATES

Alvah Halloran and Son, Inc. Funeral Home
H. Daniel Halloran
2125 Chili Avenue
Rochester, N.Y. 14624
(716) 247-7590

GREECE

Arndt Funeral Home
1118 Long Pond Rd.
(near Maiden Lane) Parking for over 100 cars
Greece, N.Y. 14626
Ronald John Arndt
(716) 225-6350

Vay, Schleich and Meeson Funeral Home Inc.
"Greece's Largest and Most Complete Facilities"
2692 Dewey Avenue
Greece, N.Y. 14616
(716) 663-5827

HART MONUMENT CO.

Since 1856

2301 Dewey Avenue
Opposite Holy Sepulchre Cemetery

865-6746

POSITION OPEN

Director of Development
for the
Catholic Diocese of Buffalo

THIS PERSON WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR
ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT
FOR THE ENTIRE DIOCESE.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Conducting programs designed to motivate the people of the Diocese to share generously of their personal and financial resources as a means for participating in the mission of the Church.
2. Assisting parishes to plan, organize, and conduct development programs.

REQUIREMENTS:

5 years experience in the field of development Ability to demonstrate skills in office management and public relations.

SALARY:
Consistent with experience.

WRITTEN REPLIES ONLY PLEASE SEND RESUME TO:

CHANCERY
The Catholic Center, Diocese of Buffalo
795 Main St., Buffalo, N.Y. 14203

POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT

KATHY PHELAN



**For
County
Legislature**

- 22 years experience as a teacher at MOS.
- 6 years as leader of Greece Republican Party.

Show your support for Kathy
November 3rd

VOTE PHELAN

Paid for by committee to elect Kathy Phelan