

TGA revisions await development decisions

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Call the diocesan Department of Annual Thanksgiving Appeal these days, and you might be caught off guard by the newly standard telephone greeting, "Catholic Foundation."

This greeting is symbolic of changes taking place in the Diocese of Rochester's budgeting and fundraising procedures. It acknowledges the fact that the TGA office has been incorporated into the Department of Development, which has also moved from the Division of Support Ministries to the Bishop's Office. The greeting also anticipates approval of a plan now being considered for both departments to be moved into a separately incorporated Foundation of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester, Inc.

As such changes continue to take effect, they will influence the future operation of the annual appeal — including the possibility that the current parish quota system will be eliminated.

Mark Seeberg, the diocese's director of development, predicted that unless the TGA keeps pace with changes in other diocesan fundraising initiatives, "all of our fundraising efforts will run into the TGA ... and the whole thing will explode."

The 1989 appeal may also have to contend with calls for a boycott voiced by individuals upset over diocesan efforts to restructure the Catholic school system. Since such talk has not materialized as an actual boycott campaign, TGA officials say discussion of a diocesan response at this time would be premature.

Unless such a boycott emerges, the 1989 appeal will appear to be "business as usual" for the average parishioner, diocesan officials say.

"We're not looking to make a lot of major changes this particular year," explained Charles Hetterich, 1989 appeal chairman. "What we're trying to do is some fine tuning."

That "fine tuning" this year includes appointing priest advisers for the 11 regions of the diocese. The advisers, members of the Priests' Advisory Committee of the TGA, will serve as resource people and liaisons between the appeal office and parishes, according to TGA director Patrick Sullivan.

"My hope is (the advisers) will help to build a stronger relationship and improve communications with each pastor in the diocese," Sullivan said. The advisers will provide pastors with opportunities to share their needs and concerns, and will help provide advice about how to more effectively run the campaign in their parishes, he explained.

Father Daniel Holland, the 1989 appeal coordinator, said the advisers, along with improved contact with the pastors, will help remind pastors of why the diocese went to the appeal and the reasons behind the TGA's current format. "(The appeal has) been around for seven or eight years, and people might be taking it for granted," he observed. "They forget what it was like before" when parishes supported the diocese through a mandatory assessment.

Efforts to enlist greater understanding and support for the appeal are vital to the

appeal's continued success, Hetterich said. He pointed out that the average parishioner's main link to the TGA is through his or her pastor, and thus, pastors' enthusiastic support for the appeal is the key to its success.

As part of efforts to communicate with the diocese as a whole, the 1989 appeal will include another videotape produced by the team of Lou Buttino and Thom Marini, who created the 1988 TGA film. Assisting them will be Elizabeth Brown, the diocese's new director of communications. She will also be working with the appeal's communications committee to revise the TGA brochures and letters to contributors.

These communication efforts may be especially important this year in light of the ongoing controversies surrounding the restructuring of the Catholic school system in the diocese. Several individuals have called for boycotts of the appeal as a way of expressing disagreement with proposed school closings. Sullivan said appeal officials will continue to monitor the situation, and if necessary, take action.

"I would hope that that's only a small number of people that would use the TGA as a mechanism to solve the school issue, which is entirely separate from the purpose and role of the TGA," Sullivan said. He added that TGA officials would keep track of the situation through the pastors to head off any potential problems.

Meanwhile, the appeal has already undergone one major change due to revisions in the diocesan budgeting process. In previous years, a TGA committee met to determine the goal, upon which the di-

cesan budget was then based. This year, the newly formed Budget Committee, a subcommittee of the Diocesan Finance Council, will recommend to Bishop Matthew Clark a diocesan budget for 1989/90. The TGA goal will be set as part of that budget proposal.

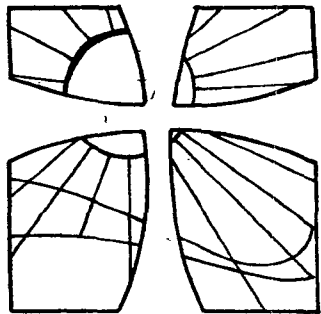
As the diocese considers future changes in the TGA, the people of the diocese will have to begin looking at the appeal in a new light, Seeberg said.

"It would be helpful if all of us in the diocese would stop thinking of the TGA in the narrow way we have (done) and think of it as charitable giving," Seeberg said. As it was originally envisioned, the TGA emphasizes gifts to the diocese rather than a mandated parish tax, he explained. But if the diocese wishes to continue with a focus on gifts, then it — like such charities as the United Way — will have take the risk of falling short of its goal.

Such a shift in thinking may include eliminating the mandated quotas assigned to parishes, Seeberg said. Under the current system, a parish must meet its quota either through contributions from parishioners or, when contributions fall short of the goal, from the parish budget. Seeberg said that such a system runs counter to the idea of charitable giving on which the appeal is based.

"If we want to do the things that other charities do, then we have to play by the same rules," Seeberg observed. He predicted that the new budget process the diocese is implementing will eventually force the TGA to examine the quota system.

Parishes provide postnatal care for those reborn through baptism



GROSS OF GLORY LIFE IN CHRIST

By Father Robert J. Kennedy
Guest columnist

People born in the font of baptism — like all newborn children — need nourishment and attentive care if they are to grow to maturity. For this reason, the church not only provides "postnatal" care for the newly baptized by means of postbaptismal catechesis. It also establishes parishes with a wide range of processes and programs that provide ongoing, life-long formation for

all the baptized. As God's children we never outgrow our need for "pure spiritual milk" (see 1 Peter 2:2, 1 Corinthians 3:1-2).

The single most important activity of parish communities for the maturity of their members is the liturgy. This is because "the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the church is directed; at the same time it is the fount from which all the church's power flows" (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, #10). Like the narrow peak of a vast mountain and the tiny source of a mighty river, the liturgy brings to thanksgiving and praise all that has been and feeds all that will be.

This week I want to focus on two ways in which the liturgy is the "summit" of Christian life. Whether the liturgy celebrated is the Eucharist or penance or marriage or the hours, it gathers together into one great act of worship the faith stories of all the worshippers and the full activity of the church.

First let us look at the people who come to participate in liturgical celebrations. It is

safe to say that they all want to be there. Although they may not be participating in the way liturgists and musicians would want, they all have reasons for being there. I would suggest that those reasons boil down to this: these folks have, in one way or another, met Jesus Christ in their lives and have come together with other believers to respond to that saving presence with them, to acknowledge the ways God walks with them in the gardens and deserts of their lives.

For example, when Bill and Marcia's baby son died after a painful year of struggling with multiple birth defects, they turned to the God of the living and the dead in the liturgy to express the grief of their loss and their thanksgiving for sharing that little life. When Ted was laid off his third job in two years, he turned to the all-powerful and provident God in the liturgy with all his self-doubts and questions, and dumped his helplessness — and a fair amount of anger — in the divine lap. When Tom and Mary reached their 30th wedding anniversary more deeply in love than ever, they turned to the God of love in the liturgy to express their joy and gratitude. And when John and Kathy and Jack and Paul and

Mary Alice are just living their lives each day where they are, they turn to the liturgy to express their faithfulness to the God who is faithful to them.

The liturgy in its variety of forms gathers all these faith experiences — and many more — into prayers of praise and thankfulness, lament and intercession to the God who listens carefully to the hearts of a beloved people. But the liturgy also gathers the activities of this beloved People of God — the church — into a "summit" expression as well.

The liturgies of initiation gather and magnify all the ways in which the church brings people to faith in Jesus Christ. The liturgies of reconciliation gather and magnify all the processes of forgiveness and restoration of broken relationships. The liturgies of commitment gather and magnify all the ways God's people serve each other and the world in the name of Christ. The liturgies of healing gather and magnify the ways in which the church heals the wounded and keeps vigil with the sick and dying. And the liturgies of the hours and the Eucharist gather and magnify all our prayers and praises of the day and the week.

Through the liturgy the church expresses all it has experienced in faith as God's believing, repentant, broken, holy people. This expressive side is only part of liturgy's role in Christian life, however. In the next two weeks we will consider how the liturgy nourishes the life and mission of the baptized.

Father Brown to offer Mass of thanksgiving

Father Michael R. Brown, who was ordained to the priesthood Saturday, April 8, will offer a Mass of thanksgiving at St. Catherine's Church, Mendon, on Sunday, April 16, at 11:45 a.m. An earlier Mass of thanksgiving took place April 9 at St. Pius X Church, Father Brown's home parish.




The son of Robert and Mary Ann Brown of Rochester, Father Brown is a graduate of Immaculate Conception Seminary at Seton Hall. He has served his deacon internship at St. Catherine's, Mendon, and previously served a 10-week summer assignment at St. John the Evangelist Church on Rochester's Humboldt Street.



Diocesan Appointments

Bishop Matthew H. Clark has announced the following diocesan appointment:

Deacon Stanley Douglas, from parish deacon at St. Mary's Church, Elmira, to parish deacon at St. Helen's Church, Rochester, effective March 23.



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