

## Thanks Giving Appeal '89

# Appeal was first viewed as alternative to tax

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

A little more than 10 years ago, parishes were still sending monthly envelopes marked "Diocesan Assessment" to Catholic families throughout the diocese.

The funds placed in these envelopes were collected at Masses, en route to a short rest in the parish budget. Soon, however, the earmarked donations were withdrawn from parish treasuries by the diocese, which used the money to finance its operations.

All that changed when Bishop Matthew H. Clark announced a new system of diocesan financing that would rely on individual Catholics' willing donations, rather than on an indirect system of taxation through the parishes.

In 1980, Bishop Clark charged a committee to study the establishment of an annual "Thanks Giving Appeal" through which the diocese would educate parishioners about the various programs it operated while asking those same parishioners to make donations to fund these programs.

John H. Glavin, the appeal's first general chairman, said the study committee believed the parish-assessment system's days were numbered.

"As I remember, there was a certain amount of bad chemistry with the (diocesan-assessment) system," said Glavin, who added that parishes often had difficulty reaching their annual assessments.

According to a *Catholic Courier* article from July 8, 1981, Bishop Clark was concerned that the assessment system would

eventually fail to meet diocesan budgetary needs. As the 1980s unfolded, diocesan officials worried that the diocese would be called upon to fill gaps left by social-service agencies whose budgets were being slashed at the state and local levels.

The diocese considered three options: increasing each parish's assessment, cutting its services or implementing the Thanks Giving Appeal. Glavin's committee recommended the third option, noting that such other dioceses as Albany and Syracuse had experienced success with similar efforts launched in the 1970s.

Glavin recalled that the committee asked Bishop Clark for his personal involvement in promoting the appeal.

To further ensure the appeal's success, the committee recommended that parishes receive all funds collected over and above their individual TGA goals.

Bishop Clark met with pastors and priests throughout the spring of 1981 to explain the TGA. He was assisted by Father James J. Marvin, pastor of St. Ambrose Church, who served as TGA campaign coordinator, and Father Peter T. Bayer, then director of pastoral planning and management, who served as the campaign's operations manager.

The bishop explained that each parish would be assigned a TGA quota, which the parish would attempt to raise through individual parishioners' pledges. If a parish failed to reach its quota, the parish would have to make up the difference between the quota and the amount parishioners pledged.

The diocese set a fund-raising goal of

\$2.2 million, and when the final results were in, more than \$3.2 million had been pledged. Eventually, a little more than \$3 million of the money pledged actually came through.

Father Bayer recalled that in the appeal's first year, some parishes were given quotas higher than what they had been assessed under the previous system, while other parishes enjoyed reductions in their quotas. Of the 160 parishes in the diocese at that time,

40 experienced a 1-7 percent decline in their assessments; 80 experienced an increase of 1-12 percent; and 40 experienced an increase of 13-20 percent.

Father Richard Shatzel, pastor of St. Philip Neri in Rochester, said that now that the TGA is firmly in place, he feels most pastors would never want to go back to the old system.

"I think the TGA is the way to go," he

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## Administering TGA costs about six cents for every dollar raised

From the standpoint of administrative costs, the diocesan Thanks Giving Appeal is one of the best bargains in town.

For every dollar pledged to the TGA this year, only six cents will be spent on administering the campaign itself.

That proportion is substantially better than what most colleges, universities and charitable organizations spend on their annual fundraising campaigns, according to Mark Seeberg, diocesan director of development.

Campaign costs at most colleges, for example, eat up 15 to 33 cents of each dollar raised on every dollar raised in annual alumni fundraising drives, Seeberg said, quoting statistics from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, a Washington-based consortium of colleges and universities.

Seeberg summed up the reasons for the diocese's ability to save so much

money on administering the TGA in one word — volunteers.

"(The TGA) is largely parish-based. A good deal of the costs are hidden," Seeberg said, noting that each pastor acts as "campaign captain" for his parish. Among other charitable institutions, such a role might be filled by a salaried worker.

Pastors do most of the TGA's publicity work, and thousands of lay volunteers save the diocese substantial labor costs, Seeberg added.

For the 1989 campaign, the TGA's administrative costs are as follows:

- \$51,068 for TGA promotion, including the production of a videotape, posters and solicitation letters.

- \$17,569 for TGA field work, including travel expenses and a percentage of the salaries of the Diocesan Ap-

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## Diocese nets \$4.2 million from sale of high school

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

A deal to sell Cardinal Mooney High School for \$9 million to the Greece Central School District has been made final, Bishop Matthew H. Clark announced on Tuesday, Oct. 17.

Attorneys for the diocese and the school's operating order, the Brothers of the Holy Cross, agreed to divide the proceeds of the sale equally between the order and the diocese after deducting closing costs of \$600,000.

The diocese's share — \$4.2 million — will be used as seed money for the Catholic School Endowment Fund for Monroe County, which was established in August. Specific details about possible uses for the fund were not available in time for the *Courier's* Tuesday morning deadline, but

should be available by the end of the week, according to Father George Norton, diocesan spokesman.

Mooney was closed in June due to declining enrollment and financial problems. Last-ditch efforts by parents of Mooney students to save the school failed in early May, and the Greece school district announced its intent to buy the school in June.

In a bond referendum on Aug. 9, Greece voters, by a margin of almost 5-1, approved the school district's purchase of the Mooney building.

In September, 1990, the Greece district plans to reopen the Mooney building as a middle school housing 900 students. Eventually, 1,300 students will attend the new Greece middle school, according to Duane Rupert, a school-district spokesman.

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