

Bishop seeks a 'stronger voice' in new post

By Teresa A. Parsons
Associate editor

Serving as a liaison between Catholic women and their church's hierarchy might seem a thankless task.

But Bishop Matthew H. Clark welcomes his election to chair the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' standing Committee on Women in Society and the Church.

"Some people do think it's a thankless job," he conceded. "I don't. I think you try to offer the best wisdom and insight you have, and have confidence enough to trust in God for the rest."

Chosen to head the committee on women at the U.S. bishops' meeting in Baltimore

earlier this month, Bishop Clark counts among his aims a broader dialogue on life issues, with greater sensitivity toward the perspectives of women.

"None of us in a three-year term thinks we're going to solve all these issues (regarding women and the church)," Bishop Clark said. "I think we would all agree that with a high level of commitment and some degree of optimism, we can at least advance the degree of understanding to a higher level."

More than ever, Bishop Clark pointed out, he will depend on the "strong support system" of women's groups in the Diocese of Rochester. Members of one link in that support system — the diocesan Commis-

sion on Women — welcomed their bishop's election.

"We are awfully proud of him and happy that this has happened because he's so capable and so committed to these issues in the church," said Judith O'Brien, commission chairwoman. "I would hope what we could do for him, because the commission is an advisory body, (would be to) be helpful in advising him as far as what's happening here, as a continuing affirmation of his work with us."

Bishop Clark has already served for several years on the NCCB's ad hoc Writing Committee for the Pastoral on Women in Society and in the Church, which he hopes will produce an official second draft

this spring.

As chairman of the committee on women, Bishop Clark will also serve on the NCCB's administrative committee, which determines the conference's overall priorities and directions.

"It's a significant commitment of time and energy," he said. "It also gives me a stronger voice consistently in the input that develops our agenda and establishes our direction."

Bishop Clark was one of two candidates nominated to head the committee on women. He and other candidates for the November NCCB elections were chosen the previous spring by a committee of

Continued on page 14

Appeal lags behind last year's campaign

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

With the in-hall phase of the Thanks Giving Appeal completed, figures for the 1989 appeal are lagging behind those from a comparable point in the 1988 campaign.

As of Nov. 15, \$2.6 million had been pledged to the 1989 TGA — 64 percent of the \$4,060,000 goal.

As of Nov. 11, 1988, \$2,679,151 in pledges had been received — 70 percent of the 1988 target of \$3,850,000.

This year's low early returns come amid concerns about threatened boycotts of the TGA — the Diocese of Rochester's chief source of income — because of the closing of Cardinal Mooney High School in June and the closing of several diocesan elementary schools under the reorganization of the Catholic school system in Monroe County. These threatened boycotts have raised

fears of a repeat of the ill-fated 1985 campaign, when contributions fell approximately \$400,000 short of the stated overall goal of more than \$3.5 million. As a result of that shortfall, the diocese was unable to fill some vacant positions, such as that of the director of the Office of Family Life, and was forced to cut back on such others as urban subsidies and tuition assistance.

TGA officials say they are unable to determine yet if boycott threats have become reality this year, and whether such boycotts could have an appreciable impact on the appeal.

"Are there people who are upset with the school situation and are holding back? Sure," acknowledged Mark Seeberg, director of the diocesan development office.

Seeberg added that "there's nothing we can do about their frustration." He noted that when the 1989 goal was set, officials

considered the possible backlash from the closing of schools, among other factors.

Instead of trying to determine if the school closings are having an effect on the 1989 appeal, Seeberg said, appeal staff members are concentrating on processing the gifts received and mailing out acknowledgements to contributors.

In fact, Seeberg explained, one of the reasons figures are lower this year than at a comparable point last year is that a new system has been implemented for recording and acknowledging contributions. Previously, contributions were tallied, then entered into a computer. Acknowledgements were mailed out later.

This year, contributions are being recorded in the computer first, and acknowl-

Continued on page 14



Banners, designed and painted by artist Carl Zollo, decorated the hall at Holy Ghost in Rochester during a recent in-house solicitation for the Thanks Giving Appeal.

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