

# People in pews ultimately pay price of TGA boycotts

Some people have declared war on the Thanks Giving Appeal.

Their letters appear on editorial pages of various newspapers, urging others to join them in boycotting the annual diocesan fundraiser. Often, the writers are parents or parishioners embittered by school closings.

Others are angered by what they perceive as a too liberal or too conservative atmosphere in the diocese; misplaced diocesan priorities; a pastor's insensitivity; church renovations ...

People have the right — and the obligation — to put their dollars where their convictions are, and to withhold money when they disagree with the way it is spent. But they should do so clearly understanding the consequences of their actions.

When parishioners' donations don't meet the parish's TGA quota, the parish is billed for the difference, according to Father Peter Bayer, diocesan chancellor. In that sense, the Thanks Giving Appeal is no different than the diocesan tax it was meant to replace.

Those who withhold their contributions intending to "get back" at the bishop or others in diocesan administration ought to know that a long-suffering pastor or business manager will more

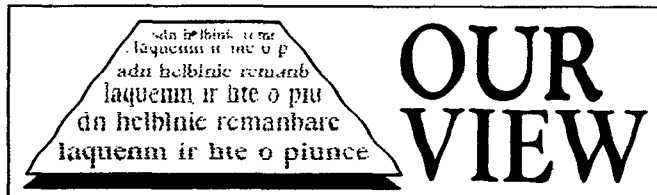
likely pay the price in anxiety over how to pay parish bills.

Nor are the bishop and top-level diocesan administrators directly affected by diocesan-level budget cuts.

In 1985, when a lot of people were turned off and even hurt by the Thanks Giving Appeal's so-called "Madison Avenue" approach, 15,000 fewer donors contributed to the appeal than had done so in 1984. The appeal came up \$400,000 short of its \$3.5 million goal, and diocesan officials got the message, abandoning the new approach.

But who paid the price? The diocesan Office of Family Life, which was without a director at the time, has never been re-established. Young Adult Ministry lost a part-time coordinator's position, which has never been replaced. Subsidies to financially strapped urban parishes were cut, along with tuition subsidies to parents of Catholic school students.

Good stewardship sometimes demands hard choices, and money speaks a message that is seldom ignored. But if you decide to send an angry message with your TGA donor form, don't forget who will pay the price.



The painful memory of 1985's bungled Thanks Giving Appeal has faded, but we'd have to suffer from amnesia to miss a bit of rewritten history contained in the TGA's 1989 "Manual of Operations for Pastors and Parish Appeal Leadership."

As reported in the *Courier's* issue of January 23, 1986, Bishop Matthew H. Clark announced that the 1985 appeal had fallen \$400,000 short of its stated \$3.56 million goal.

Yet this year's TGA operations manual reports that the 1985 appeal goal was only \$3,000,931 — which back then was the sum of the parish quotas. According to the manual, 1985's TGA exceeded its goal by more than \$100,000 — surprising news for those whose budgets were axed.

All of which raises the question of how we can learn from past mistakes if we refuse to remember that we made them.

— The Editors

## Visionary book brings Bible tales to life for readers

To the editor:

My purpose for writing a letter to the editor is different than most. Often the letters are laced with anger, vengeance or other negative attitudes about issues or even people. I simply and caringly want to share something beautiful with anyone who truly wants to know the Person of Jesus by introducing a book which makes Jesus and the people of His time very real; a book which enhances stories we know from the Bible and gives them perspective in regard to the events and places of occurrence during the life of Christ.

The book to which I am referring is a seven-part, five-volume book called "The Poem of the Man-God," written by Maria Valtorta as directed through visions from Jesus, Himself. She wrote the book between 1944 and 1947. Although she had no

previous experience in writing, she was given a very special gift for writing this book. Her style and ability to describe the settings of each vision, the people, the terrain, the smells and the sense of Jesus makes everything so real that you become part of them, and Jesus becomes a part of you.

Her original notes were typed unaltered and a copy was sent to Pope Pius XII. He directed them to be published with this statement: "Publish this work as it is. There is no need to give an opinion about its origin, whether it be extraordinary or not. Who reads it, will understand. One hears of many visions and revelations. I will not say they are all authentic; but there are some of which it could be said that they are." The original Italian publication is currently being translated into English with

each volume being released as soon as it is printed. Only the first three volumes are presently available. Volume IV will be printed in late 1989 and Volume V will be available in 1990.

My experience of reading the first three volumes (four parts) was: profoundly spiritual. The volumes are not made up of chapters, but rather story segments which build on previous visions much like entries in a travel journal. Periods of deep meditation and contemplation often followed my reading of many of these segments.

The first volume begins with a background of events just before Mary's birth. Two and three continue through Jesus' three years of public life. The last two volumes will focus on three parts titled, "The Preparation of the Passion," "The Passion" and "The Glorification." I anxiously await their release.

The English translation of the book is not available locally. It has to be ordered from a few distributors in the U.S. Mine was purchased from the Weible Columns, Inc., P.O. Box 2647, Myrtle Beach, S.C., 29578, for \$35 per volume.

Everyone I know who has read this book has had a similar experience to mine. Along with them, I strongly urge readers of this letter to obtain the book and share it with others. Sharing Jesus through this book is an opportunity to bring Jesus closer to the hearts of those who love Him and to make believers of those who don't. It is truly an extraordinary experience; a journey with Jesus through the events of His life.

Harriet Beiter  
Butler Drive  
Pittsford

E. Leo McMannus  
N.E. Avenue  
North Miami, Fla.

## Did headline misrepresent prelates' natures?

To the editor:

When the Fort Lauderdale (Fla.) *Sun-Sentinel* (Oct. 15) has a headline such as "Gibbons overpowers Pope John Paul," I am not puzzled: I can excuse it for the newspaper's limitations. But when your headline reads "Bishop Kearney nips McQuaid" (Oct. 5), I am nonplussed.

I knew Bishop Kearney, and he was every inch a Christian gentleman as well as a bishop. So irenic was he that he would go to any length to avoid a confrontation. Even a mildly bellicose word like "nips," therefore, is completely inappropriate.

Bishop McQuaid I did not know, but my father told me that he was a warrior bishop, and whoever tangled with him suffered badly. Therefore, your headline

makes no sense to me.

Come to think of it, though, perhaps your redoubtable and ageless columnist Father Paul Cuddy, a warrior type, who has fought every manner of excess, except the culinary, from Chaucer's Tales to the graffiti in Ireland, is more like Bishop McQuaid. Father Raymond Heisel, whose whimsy, especially in his recent correspondence with you, improves like rare wine with age, is more like Bishop Kearney.

You need both types today, especially in your opinion pages, lest they appear dull, gray, and depressing.



## Bible study enhances life

To the editor:

Thank you for your article on Bible study that appeared in your October 19th edition.

For the past two years I have been leading a Bible study group in a weekly session at my home. We have studied Paul's letters and the Gospel of Luke. We had permission to look into the audio-visual Bible study sessions that are put out by the Little Rock Scriptural Study people, but a survey indicated that there wasn't enough of a demand right now in Auburn to warrant the cost. And so we are using the Collegeville Bible Commentary books put out by Liturgical Press.

Perhaps your article will stimulate the desire for Bible study in Auburn. If folks only realized what a life-enhancing proposition the word of God is, they would surely flock to learning more of it.

Thomas Fogarty  
Walnut Street  
Auburn

## Sanitation concerns obscure point of 'peace' exchange

To the editor:

In response to the letter from the woman from Waterloo who expressed "disgust" to the shaking of hands when extending the Peace of Christ during Mass: Are you serious?

When you take that person's hand and clasp it to your own, you are offering them the Peace of Christ, you are inviting them into a unity with Our Lord. I cannot imagine a greater honor than someone offering me that kind of peace. Not to alarm anyone, but people in my church (who will remain anonymous) have even been known to hug and/or kiss! I wonder how it makes Jesus feel when he is offering himself in the Eucharist, his ultimate sacrifice and promise to us, and we are more concerned

with the people around us. How ungrateful and unfeeling we are to someone who is offering so much.

So when you are wishing the kind of peace to people that Jesus brought to the world, keep in mind who he brought it to. Did he wish his peace to only the healthy and the clean? No, he didn't. He ministered equally to the sick, poor, and countless times to people afflicted with leprosy. Want more information? Read the Gospel. I don't mean to criticize anyone's faith I'm only saying that sometimes we listen to Jesus' message, yet we do not understand.

Christian Case  
Kreag Road  
Fairport

**CATHOLIC COURIER**

Bishop Matthew H. Clark, *President*  
Bishop Dennis W. Hickey, *Gen. Mgr.*  
Karen M. Franz, *Editor/Asst. Gen. Mgr.*

---

1150 Buffalo Road • Rochester, New York 14624 • 716/328-4340

**Editorial Department:**  
Richard A. Kiley, News Editor • Teresa A. Parsons, Associate Editor  
Lee Strong, Staff Writer • Rob Cullivan, Staff Writer  
Linda Dow Hayes, Photographer

**Business Department:**  
Mary E. Bittner, Office Manager • Bernie Puglisi, Advertising Manager  
Jeanne A. Morin, Circ. Coordinator • Kathy Welsh, Ad. Account Executive

**Production Department:**  
Lorraine Hennessey, Graphic Designer • Wayne A. Holt, Graphic Artist