Appeal emphasizes common responsibility

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By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Monday, October 21.

Our Thanks Giving Appeal is in full swing once again. In all of our parishes this past weekend and for the next two weekends, your pastor and other parish leaders will ask you to make a gift in support of the TGA. They will highlight the reasons for the appeal, the common responsibilities we can meet and the good works we can do because of your generous support.

I want to add my own request directly to theirs and ask you please, if you have not done so already, to consider making a generous gift to this year's appeal. I don't define the amount because that doesn't matter so much.

What matters to me most is that you participate in this manner in the life of our local church; that your participation flows from a sense of belonging to our family of faith; and that it somehow expresses your commitment to that family's activities.

If all the women and men of our church responded to the appeal in this way, our life would be significantly strengthened and we would be able to extend the care of the Lord to more people in need than we can now assist.

You will recall that when the TGA first began 11 years ago, it replaced the system of direct taxation on the ordinary annual income of every parish community in the diocese. If, for example, the people of St. Brendan's in a given year contributed \$1,200,000 to the parish in the Sunday collection and the diocesan tax rate for that year was 8 percent, then the parish would owe the diocese \$96,000. The pastor would pay off this assessment, generally in monthly or quarterly payments.

In that system, there was no direct connection between the people of the parish and the larger church to which they belonged. Hence there was no communication of need, little emphasis on our common responsibility and no invitation to our people to support our work. Our appeal over the years has helped us to make these connections. We continue to grow in our awareness that we are not an accidental conglomeration of 160 parishes, but one people gifted by God and called to build God's kingdom in our 12 counties.

In the last two years, we have taken an important step to build on the good things the TGA has helped us to accomplish. That step is to remove all compulsory quotas from the program. Each parish community receives a fair-share goal that is meant to serve both as a guide and an encouragement to giving. But failure to achieve that level of giving will not result in a financial burden on the parish revenues.

In past years of the TGA, if St. Brendan's parish quota as \$40,000, and the people of the parish contributed \$35,000 toward the goal, St. Brendan's was required to make up the \$5,000 deficit. Under our new program, St. Brendan's would not be charged to make up the deficit.

This new step is not without risk, but I am delighted that we have taken it. It allows us to emphasize bonds of faith and affection; it permits conversation about commitment rather than taxation, about free participation rather than grudging cooperation.

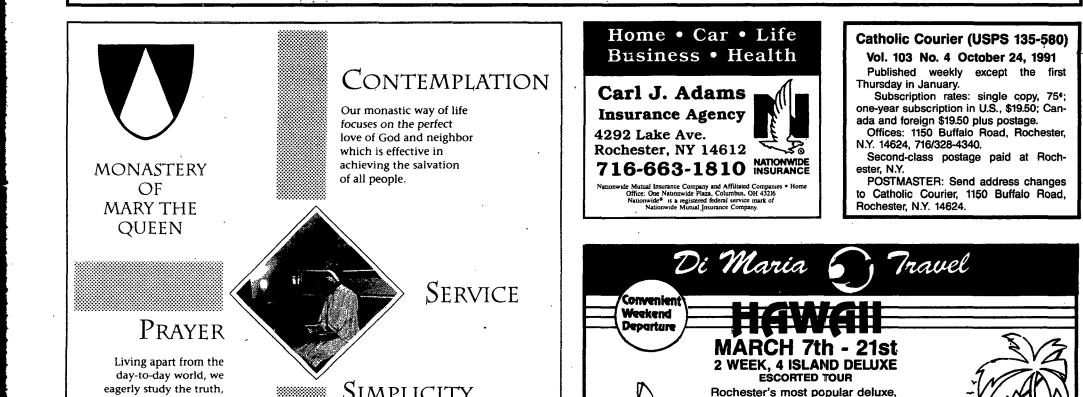
I hope that this new direction will please you and encourage your generous support of this year's TGA. If you have never participated in the appeal, please consider a first-time gift.

If you have participated in the past and dropped out over the years, please think about strengthening our efforts by rejoining. We would be grateful to have your help. I know you may have dropped out because



of some hurt caused by me or others, or by some particular decision with which you disagree. I can understand that and will respect your decision. But I invite you to remember that family life generally deepens when people stay with it, rejoice and share in the life that's there, and work hard to make the family a better place to be.

Peace to all.



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eagerly study the truth, wholeheartedly ponder the Scriptures, pray intently, willingly practice penance, work attentively, live simply and rejoice in sisterly sharing. We thereby live in the midst of the Church and world,	Rochester's most popular deluxe, escorted tour to Hawaii! We invite you to compare. Featuring our exclusive guide — Mr. Ed Kahale! ALWAYS A SELLOUT - BOOK NOW! 1521 MONROE AVE. • 271-0100
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Telephone: For more information, contact Sr. Miriam of The Cross,O.P., Monastery of Mary the Queen, 1310 West Church Street, Elmira, NY 14905. Phone: (607) 734-9506.	Chairman, Search Committee, New York State Federation of Catholic School Parents, 149-56 Delaware Avenue, Flushing, NY 11355.
2	Catholic Courier