

Annual appeal put emphasis on shared responsibility

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down, but at the same time new monies were being raised for diocesan ministries."

In addition to raising money, the TGA was intended to help change people's ideas about the diocese, noted Mark Seeberg, diocesan director of development.

"The ideal behind this whole thing is to have more people in the Catholic community realize we are a diocesan church, not just parish-based," Seeberg said.

"I think the biggest benefit (of the TGA) is the awareness it's helped us develop in our diocesan community of the bonds that unite us together," Bishop Clark acknowledged.

Still, Glavin noted, the appeal initially faced skepticism from some members of the diocese — especially those in areas distant from the City of Rochester.

"It became evident to me that there was a real communications problem in parts of the diocese and feelings that they weren't first-class people," Glavin said. "Bishop Clark was anxious to address that."

Hence the many trips to parishes throughout the diocese, Glavin commented. The campaign also included efforts to educate people about diocesan spending and services, he added.

"As we went along, I think we felt the enthusiasm was building, and the skepticism was going away," Glavin said.

Indeed, the initial appeal proved successful. The overall goal was \$2.2

million, but the diocese received \$3.2 million in pledges.

The goals have gradually increased over the years. The 1992-93 campaign goal will be approximately \$4.1 million. The exact figure will be released at an Oct. 26 press conference, according to Seeberg.

But in spite of its successes, the TGA had flaws, Seeberg noted, pointing especially to the quota system as a problem.

"It was perceived cynically by the pastors," Seeberg said. "You don't say, 'Give a free-will gift,' and 10 months later, if the parish didn't make it, send the pastor a bill."

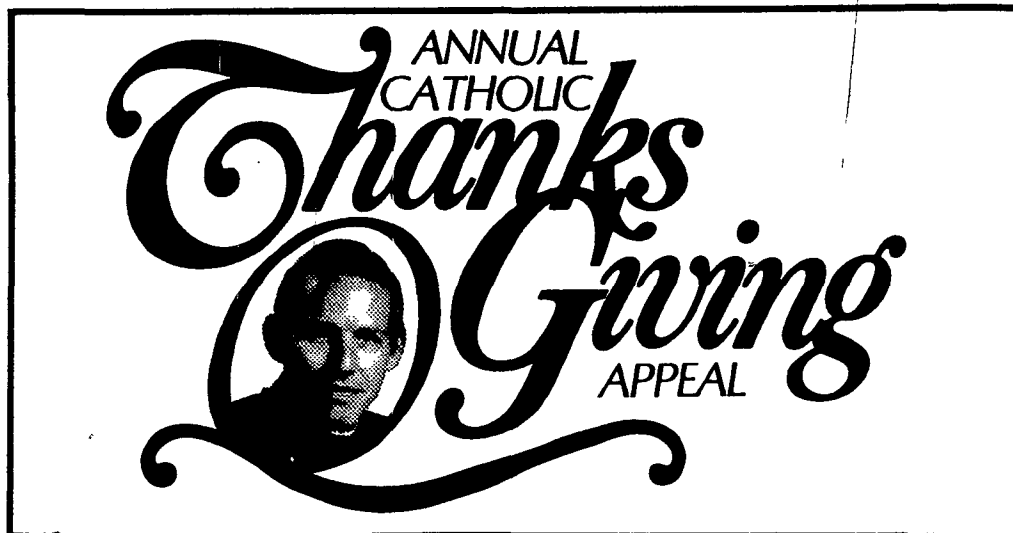
Further, the quotas may have limited how much some people gave, observed Tom D'Agostino, who was hired Sept. 8 of this year to serve as the new TGA director.

"I think people were pegging their gifts to how much the parish goal was," D'Agostino said.

Nor did the idea of a quota fit in with the overall development program being implemented in the diocese, Bishop Clark observed.

"Now that we're trying to initiate a more encompassing idea of development, we needed to locate our annual appeal in the broader context of development," Bishop Clark said. "I think we've had a challenge not to be too constricted or too narrowly focused by the TGA."

That "broader context" is partly necessary because of a difficulty frequently encountered with annual appeals, Seeberg said. The appeal can be affected by a variety of factors, such as the economy or anger over church



policies and actions, he observed.

Seeberg noted that such fluctuations can hurt the diocese, which depends on the TGA for a substantial portion of its operating budget — varying between 60 and 70 percent each year.

In the 1985 campaign, for example, the overall goal actually was set much higher than the sum of the parish goals. Organizers had assumed that the difference would be raised by appealing to wealthier donors to give more, Father Bayer observed.

However, the '85 TGA fell short even though parishes made their combined goal. The result, Father Bayer acknowledged, was diocesan budget cuts.

"I think people were giving generously, but were giving smaller amounts," Father Bayer said. "I think they had the impression that their gifts were not important."

Finally, the diocese did away with quotas for the first time in the 1991-92 appeal. That policy will continue, even though it has some risk to it, Bishop Clark said.

"I think that sense of risk has to be seen in the broader context of the entire church," Bishop Clark said. "If there is risk in funding our community's needs, then we share that risk together."

Glavin, for one, applauds the decision to eliminate quotas.

"I think the spirit of the thing should be to get people to support the things they should support and not to bludgeon them into giving," Glavin said.

Already, the development program has been successful in increasing annual giving to the diocese, Seeberg observed. When it began, the TGA was the only form of annual giving in the diocese. The diocese now enjoys other forms of annual giving — with gifts being given on an annual basis for such purposes as support for Catholic schools. Thus in the 1991-92 fiscal year, the diocese netted \$4.6 million in annual gifts — of which just less than \$4.1 million came from the TGA.

Seeberg predicted that the trend would continue. At the same time, the TGA has evolved into a year-round operation, which includes not only the parish phase but also a "leadership" phase designed to solicit contributions from donors capable of giving large gifts. This effort, conducted prior to the parish "in-hall" solicitations in the fall, netted approximately \$500,000 for the 1991-92 TGA.

But the TGA has succeeded beyond simply raising money, Father Bayer noted.

"It has certainly brought a consciousness of the diocesan church and its ministries to parishes," Father Bayer concluded.



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Sister Mary Agnes Theresa Georger, RSM, taught in diocesan schools for 47 years, at 78

BRIGHTON — Sister Mary Agnes Theresa Georger, RSM, who taught for 47 years in the Rochester diocese, died on Monday, Sept. 14, 1992, after a short illness. She died in Lourdes Hall, the motherhouse's infirmary, located at 1437 Blossom Road. Sister Agnes Theresa was 78.

She celebrated her 60th jubilee earlier this year. She would have been honored during a celebration at the motherhouse with other jubilarians on Mercy Day, Sept. 20. In addition, Sister Agnes Theresa worked in parish ministry — most recently as a parish visitor at St. Louis Church, Pittsford, from 1984-90.

A Rochester native, her home parish was St. John's of Rochester. She entered the Mercy community in 1931 and professed perpetual vows in 1937.

Sister Agnes Theresa was a member of Our Lady of Mercy High School's first graduating class in 1932. She went on to receive her degree in education from St. Bonaventure University.

Her longest teaching stints included St. Andrew's School, Rochester, for 21 years (1934-35, 1936-54, 1959-61); St. John's School in Clyde for 11 years (1954-59, 1962-68); and St. Louis School in Pittsford for 10 years (1974-84). She also taught at Holy Cross and Our Lady of Mount Carmel schools in Ro-

chester, St. Patrick's School in Elmira, and St. Joseph's School in Penfield.

"Agnes imbibes the spirit of a compassionate, gentle, loving, filled-with-life person," said Sister Nancy Whitley, RSM, director of development for the Mercy community and a longtime friend of Sister Mary Agnes Theresa. "If I could be half the Sister of Mercy that Agnes Theresa (was), I would feel I was really striving to be the best sister I could be."

Her ministerial appointments included serving as parish assistant and religious education coordinator at St. John's Church in Clyde, and volunteer parish assistant at Holy Name Church in Rochester.

When Sister Agnes Theresa retired to the motherhouse in 1990 due to failing health, she assisted in the administration and development offices until June of 1992.

Survivors include her brother and sister-in-law, Clarence and Mary; sister and brother-in-law, Marion and Marquis Paul; and several nieces and nephews.

A Mass of Christian Burial for Sister Agnes Theresa was celebrated on Friday, Sept. 18, at the motherhouse chapel. Burial was on Monday, Sept. 21, at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Rochester.

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