

Finance & Stewardship

1995/96 TGA collection will support synod goals

By Kathleen Schwar
Copy editor/Staff writer

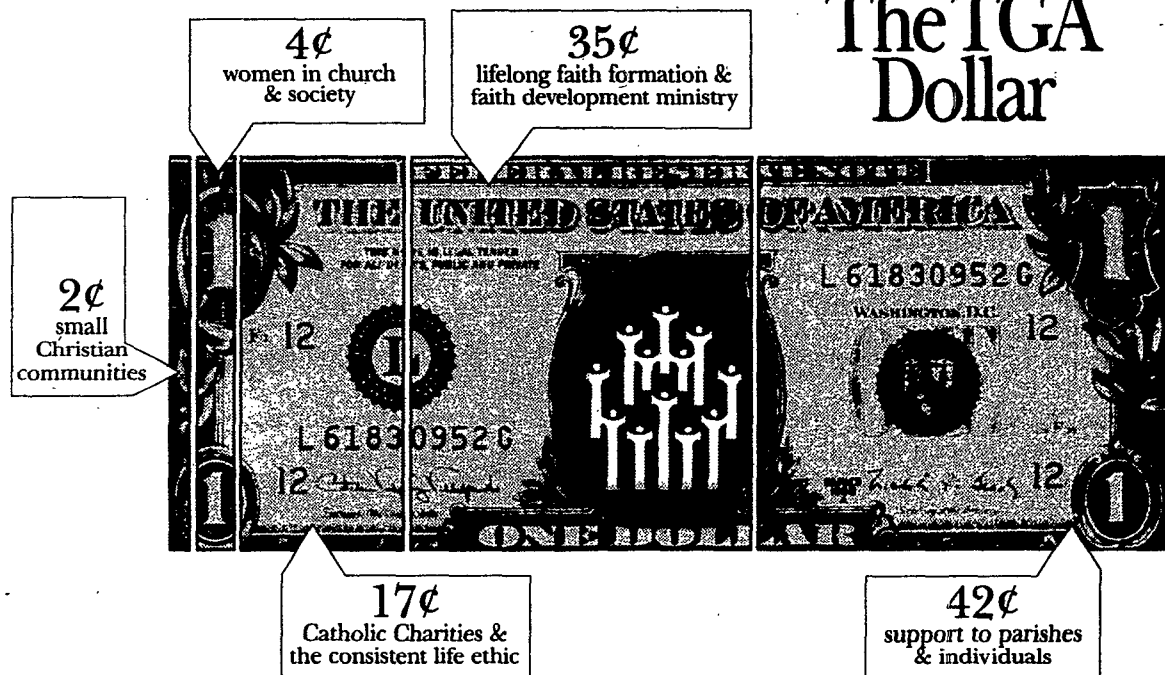
As director of annual giving for the Diocese of Rochester, Thomas D'Agostino depends on people's "good graces" to donate through the Thanks Giving Appeal. Colleagues in the development field "think I'm out of my mind," he said.

"We are unique in America," he observed, noting that most dioceses operate by setting a quota per parish, while some impose a tax, and others combine a tax and an appeal with a quota. But this diocese's approach has worked.

Last year, the TGA met its goal, raising \$4.6 million to fund diocesan operations. The goal for the the 1995/96 appeal is \$4.8 million.

The 1995/96 appeal is also slightly different in the way it is being presented to people, D'Agostino explained. The focus is on synod goals.

The TGA has always supported synod objectives, and highlighted people helped through the campaign, but the objectives weren't defined as such until synod volunteers finished clarifying the goals, he said, observing, "We owe it to those people out there to put the money behind where they decided this church should be."



He estimated that out of every TGA dollar:

- 17 cents will go to Catholic Charities and the consistent life ethic;
- 2 cents will go to small Christian communities;
- 4 cents will go to women in church and society;
- 35 cents will go to lifelong faith formation and faith development ministry;
- 42 cents will go for other support to parishes and individuals.

This year's theme is "Bring Forth the Kingdom on Earth," D'Agostino noted, adding, "We hope it will be closer through this appeal."

Tom Maguire, TGA co-chairman with Father Joseph D'Aurizio, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church, said that in precampaign meetings since May, "the mood of the Catholic laity was very very upbeat."

Maguire and Father D'Aurizio are working with 800 volunteers recruited by parish-

es themselves this year in contrast with about 300 in Maguire's first year with the campaign in 1993.

"With the Synod, people are much more responsive to the needs of the diocese," Maguire said. "We feel the Synod inculcated in a lot of people what the diocese does or wants to do."

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will appeal to the people of the diocese through 30-second television spots during the 6 p.m.

news on weekdays Oct. 23-Nov. 10. Broadcasts are planned for Channels 8, 10, and 13 in the Rochester area; channel 3 in Syracuse; and channel 36 in Elmira. This use of television spots by the bishop is a first, Maguire said.

D'Agostino added that money for the messages was made available by shifting money from radio and graphic arts budgets.

TGA officials are seeking to increase the number of contributors by 10 percent, D'Agostino said. Of 136,000 parishioners registered in the diocese, 59,000 contributed to last year's appeal. The average gift was \$78, although two-thirds of the people donated less than that.

"We feel there is tremendous room for growth in this if 70,000 to 80,000 participate," D'Agostino said.

It has been done before., he said. In the first campaign, after Bishop Clark created the TGA in 1981 to replace parish income assessments, 70,000 people participated.

"It was the biggest year ever," he said. Perhaps people did not realize that the TGA was to be an ongoing effort to meet diocesan needs, he speculated. But he hopes that they are catching on.

Parishes creative, individualize campaigns

By Kathleen Schwar
Copy editor/Staff writer

Beyond generating income for the Diocese of Rochester, the Thanks Giving Appeal stirs creativity and the spirit of volunteerism in parishes throughout the campaign, according to Thomas D'Agostino, the diocese's director of annual giving.

"We have 800 parish volunteers working on this, so we're running this appeal with a low overhead cost," he said. That cost, he added, is about five cents on the dollar. Each parish's appeal can be run with as few as 14 volunteers or as many as 50, as successfully illustrated by St. Charles Borromeo Church and Holy Ghost Church, respectively.

"Last year we asked for volunteers," recalled Barbara Pedeville, a Holy Ghost TGA volunteer and coordinator of parish personnel for the diocese. "People signed their names and put them in the basket at the back of the church. We got about 100. It was more than we could use."

The TGA at Holy Ghost has a core group of 15 people including past, present, and future chairpersons, Pedeville said. They provide, she observed, "new life, new involvement and new enthusiasm that grows from year to year."

"We're a fun group," she added. "People don't want to get off the group. A lot have been on it three or four years. I think we've created a sense of togetherness, of community, of working together not only for the parish but the wider diocesan community."



san community."

They stuff 1,200 envelopes with information for each member or family in an efficient assembly-line fashion. Each meeting ends with a social time at the rectory or church with cookies, bagels, and coffee.

As part of creating a sense of fun, they have been raffling off six turkeys during the campaign — which they will do again this year. Last year, campaign volunteers also offered yo-yos, to interest children in bringing their parents to the "in-halls" where they were given pledge cards by some of the campaign's approximately 30 other volunteers.

This year, the children will receive little prayer books. Parents then will proceed from the pledge card table to where the core group members are waiting to receive pledges. Once past there, parishioners may

mingle and enjoy cider and doughnuts.

"It's just a nice little perk," said Mike Malone, who chairs the appeal with his wife Marianne. The previous chairs, Bob and Edie Kennedy, documented the campaign so well that the Malones can proceed step by step.

"We have a three-ring binder called a 'bible,'" Mike Malone said. Each tab marks volunteer information or the campaign schedule or a letter sample, for example. Bob Kennedy even left a schematic mapping the procedure for the in-halls, which this year will be held the weekends of Oct. 28-29, and Nov. 4-5 and 11-12.

Both Pedeville and Malone credit Father Alexander Bradshaw, the pastor, with the campaign's success.

"He's very enthusiastic and actually sells the program to you," Malone said. "He gives you the hard-core facts — here's where every part of your dollar goes."

This year's goal is \$43,050, 2.5 percent above last year's, which parishioners met, according to Father Bradshaw. A different tack is taken at St. Charles, where Father John Firpo, parochial vicar, said a direct mail campaign first attempted last year worked so well that it's being done again this year.

"I'll give credit to the letter we wrote," he said, referring to a letter sent out by the pastor, Father Edward Palumbos, and himself. "We worked with the diocese putting together the steps."

The diocese prints the letter for the parish, and it is sent out to 2,500 member families and individuals shortly after Bishop Matthew H. Clark's letter and brochure to parishioners goes out from the diocesan TGA office.

Last year's parish letter spelled out how the parish's goal of \$84,500 was set, explaining that it took into account employment uncertainty and church repairs needed, including a new roof. This year's letter explains the new \$87,500 goal. "We are very direct, very honest, saying here's what we believe we can do based on the economic situation," Father Firpo said.

Later, they will send thank-you letters to individuals who donated, and thank donors also as a group from the pulpit and in church bulletins. Last year, the parish donated \$87,000.

Dave Andrews, who with his wife Marie and Father Firpo co-chairs the TGA at St. Charles, said that after the mailings go out, "Parishioners are waiting with bated breath to hear from the diocese how we're doing on our goal."

Some pledges are sent directly to the diocese, but the diocese computes the information quickly, so the chairmen can provide feedback the next Sunday. "I think people here are as responsive or more so to the direct mail approach," he said, "probably because we get it in their hands directly."

This approach also eliminates the extra steps parishioners have to make to go to the parish hall and find their pledge cards, he concluded.

CUA head thanks diocese for \$26,566

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Brother Patrick Ellis, FSC, president of the Catholic University of America, recently thanked the Diocese of Rochester for its contribution of \$26,566.17 to the annual diocesan collection supporting CUA.

"We gratefully acknowledge your compelling logic to make your University worthy of its proud name and to move us to benefit you and your diocese in its multiple ministries," Brother Ellis wrote in a letter to Bishop Matthew H. Clark. "I assure you that we strive daily to make this an investment in the solutions to your needs."

CUA, founded in 1867, is the United States' only higher education institution established by U.S. bishops.

Notre Dame seeks parishes' histories

The Theodore M. Hesburgh Library at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind., is seeking parish histories documenting the life of the parish, including silver, golden, diamond or centennial celebrations.

They will be added to the library's Parish History Collection.

Those possessing such information may write to Charlotte Ames, Catholic Americana Librarian, 217 Hesburgh Library, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Ind. 46556-5629, or call 219/651-6772.