

FEATURE

Retiree 'recycles' more than \$76,000 for missions

By Lee Strong
Associate editor

IRONDEQUOIT — Dorothy K. Miller is used to strange looks.

She regularly attracts attention as, dressed in old and sometimes holey clothes, she rummages through garbage cans for recyclable bottles and cans. More than once people have come up to the 75-year-old and offered her money to buy a good meal.

But the bottles and cans the St. Margaret Mary parishioner collects are not for buying her food.

Since 1989, Miller has raised \$76,141.17 for the Franciscan missions from her bottle and can efforts.

Her unofficial goal: \$100,000. "I'd like to get there. If I had two good years like last year"

Last year, in fact, she raised more than \$14,000. But even if she should reach her goal, she said, "I won't quit then. I'll go as long as I can because people don't want me to stop."

"Stop" is apparently not a regular part of Miller's vocabulary.

Most mornings, she starts collecting at 6:30, loading up her station wagon with bottles and cans found in garbage cans and along the road, and saved for her by homeowners and businesses. Some days, she will put in as many as eight hours collecting the containers, turning them in for cash, keeping accounts and producing a monthly newsletter for regular contributors and supporters.

Even before she became involved with the recycling effort, she began raising — through more conventional means — do-



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

After filling her station wagon with cans donated by businesses and individuals, or found on the ground, Dorothy Miller transfers them into shopping carts to take for redemption.

nations for Father Thomas Brown, OMI, a Rochester native working in Brazil. Since 1958, her efforts for him alone have netted some \$90,000.

And as far back as 1950, she was working long hours on behalf of the less fortunate.

That year, she came across some hand-

made items being sold by Holy Angels Home, an institution on Winton Road that housed troubled girls. She bought some of the items as Christmas gifts, then got inspired to try to sell them to help benefit the home. Each night after getting out of work at Eastman Kodak Company — where she worked for 41

years — she would go door-to-door selling the items until late in the evening.

"One Christmas season I made over \$1,000 for them," she recalled.

She curtailed those efforts when her father died in 1954, and she had to be home more with her mother.

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