

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Hymns win, will 'sing in' New Year

By Kathleen Schwar  
Staff writer

To celebrate the Great Jubilee Year 2000, parishes across the diocese will unite in singing the works of two area composers.

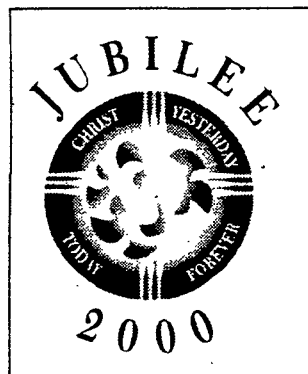
Cary Ratcliff's "Sing of Our God" and H. Ricardo "Ric" Ramirez' "Te Deum" won a diocesan hymn contest for the Jubilee year. Ramirez' hymn was designed for parish eucharistic celebrations on Dec. 31-Jan. 1. Ratcliff's will serve as the opening hymn at evening prayer celebrations over which Bishop Matthew H. Clark is to preside in the diocese's various regions.

"I'm elated at having won because it not only shows a desire for new and exciting hymns but it also shows we are in a great time of creativity," said Ramirez, who recently became director of music at Corpus Christi Church in Rochester. He wrote the music to Herman Stuempfle's poetic version of the ancient Latin hymn of praise "Te Deum."

Ramirez said both winning hymns are fitting for Jubilee services as they reflect that "Here we are at a wonderful celebration of 2000 years, rejoicing over our history and looking forward to the future."

Similarly pleased, Ratcliff said, "I am thrilled. I do write a fair amount of church music, and I'm always glad when it finds a home and meets a need."

Noting that the submissions were anonymous, he said, "People are really picking this because it says something to them."



Ratcliff is music director for First Presbyterian Church of Pittsford and has composed music for various denominations. His "Loving Hands"

hymn is often used at Catholic weddings.

The diocesan Office of Liturgy introduced both hymns during Leadership Days in August. It planned to have demo tapes in the mail to parishes by late September. Also, the chief Jubilee hymn, "Te Deum," will be sung at an Oct. 2 Eucharist during the Catholic Charities USA annual conference.

Joan Workmaster, diocesan director of liturgy, said it was unusual for the diocese to sponsor a hymn contest. "Because of the Jubilee year, we felt this would be a time to do several things," she said. "Firstly, to provide hymnody for the entire diocese to be singing and learning that would unite us in prayer. Secondly, it would be a good time to recognize composers who are part of the diocese, to recognize their talent and ability."

Eight judges from the diocese, parishes and such organizations as the National Association of Pastoral Musicians' and World

Library Publications' made the selections. Twenty composers with ties to the diocese were invited to compete.

Both Ratcliff and Ramirez have extensive backgrounds in music. Ratcliff, a pianist, has been a conductor and professor at Eastman School of Music, and composer in residence at the Strasenburgh Planetarium. He currently is a keyboardist with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra.

Ramirez, an organist, teacher and choreographer, served as organist at the 1993 Synod celebration and other diocesan celebrations. He's also been music director at St. Ambrose and Blessed Sacrament churches in Rochester.

He said he begins composing by studying the words. "I try to carry them in my head. I might be sitting with a cup of coffee or walking with that. There is a point of contemplation," he said. "From there, the muses, if you will, come."

"I had a tune that was rattling around," Ratcliff said, adding that he sits at the piano all day long composing. "A hymn is very hard, because it's one page long — that's all," he said. "... I am constantly reevaluating, trying to find freshness, avoid cliché, find right match of images, of words, of rhythms, of tune, of the singing voice."

In "Sing of Our God," he added, "A couple times the word 'timeless' comes in, and that's part of the effect of the song, I think, to get a sense of timelessness, the largeness of God, of a bigger picture, as we're crossing the millennium point."

## Newspaper sends survey

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

As the new millennium beckons, the *Catholic Courier* is surveying its readers to find out what they like and dislike about the paper, and what changes they would like to see it make.

The survey results will also help the *Courier's* advertising department to attract more advertisers.

A four-page survey put together by the Rochester-based polling firm Harris Interactive (formerly the Gordon S. Black Corporation), along with an explanatory letter from Bishop Matthew H. Clark, was being mailed to 3,200 subscriber households in the diocese on Sept. 29.

Karen M. Franz, general manager and editor of the *Courier*, said that the newspaper's publisher — Bishop Clark, as well as its management and board, agreed it was important to conduct a readership survey at this time.

"It's been five years since the last survey," Franz said. "It's appropriate at this time to say, 'We've made a lot of changes in the last five years, and ... to ask how effective the changes have been.'"

In response to data from the last survey, conducted in 1994, the *Courier* staff added a number of new features and eliminated some others. The weekly page for teens got a new look and was renamed "On the Move."

Monthly features focusing on senior citizens, parents and young adults were added. Weekly coverage of high school sports coverage was eliminated.

Also in response to the 1994 survey, the *Courier* increased the number of catechetically oriented stories it publishes, Franz said.

She noted that the researchers from Harris Interactive hope to receive at least 800 completed surveys, with a good representation from each county of the diocese. Survey results will be tabulated in November, she said.

In order to determine whether readers in various parts of the diocese have different opinions about the newspaper, a code number has been printed on the survey forms to indicate the recipient's county of residence, Franz said. But she emphasized that there is no way for the researchers or the *Courier* staff to identify any respondent's individual responses.

The new survey contains questions asking readers what their favorite features are; what they would like to see the paper cover more; and how satisfied they are with the *Courier's* quality.

Changes made to the paper would probably not begin appearing until January, Franz said.

## Halloween dance kicks off Christmas Appeal

The *Catholic Courier* and Odyssey, the diocesan young-adult network, will (g)host a benefit Halloween dance for young adults (21+) on Friday, Oct. 29.

All proceeds will go to the *Catholic Courier's* Catholic Charities Christmas Appeal, which helps individuals and families facing financial emergencies. Admission is \$10 per person.

Festivities will run from 8 p.m. to the witching hour (midnight) at the Top of the Plaza Restaurant, 1400 Midtown Tower, Rochester. DJ James Tunes disc-jockey service will provide music for dancing. Finger foods will be served, and a cash bar will be available. Costumes are optional,

but prizes will be awarded for the best ones.

The Christmas Appeal has been a collaborative project of the *Courier* and diocesan Catholic Charities since 1969. It has helped provide a pool of money the various agencies of Catholic Charities use all year to help people who do not qualify for other forms of assistance or whose needs must be met before assistance begins.

The *Courier's* staff increased its involvement in the appeal in 1996, designing a new logo and organizing a dinner-theater event featuring the Aquinas

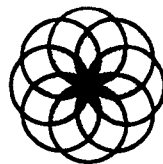
Follies.

Workers at Catholic Charities, Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Foundation and diocesan Urban Services use the year-round fund to provide snow boots and medications for children, pay for furnace repairs and transportation to work, and much more. Agencies also use Christmas Appeal funds to help with education and job training.

Further information about the dance is available through Odyssey, 716/328-3228, ext. 375, or 800-388-7177, ext. 375; or the *Courier* at 716/328-4340 or 800-600-3628.



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