

Parishes, schools, diocese depend on TGA

"Love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

If all goes well, you will see this quote from the Gospel of St. John on the cover of the Thanks Giving Appeal brochure you should receive in the mail this week. In selecting these beautiful words to express this year's TGA theme, we had two principal hopes in mind.

One was that the words of John would remind us all of our responsibility to support the needs of our diocesan family. That means, in essence, support for those services and ministries that are important to our well-being but that are better or more efficiently done at the diocesan level than at the parish level.

The second hope was that this same theme would make us mindful of our obligations to our sisters and brothers who look to us for support when life's challenges are more than they can meet without help from the community. Our response to them may be in direct human services. Sometimes our response is to stand with them, advocating for a change in systems or public policies that leave them locked in poverty or oppressed in any way.

I ask you please to do me the favor of reading this material when it arrives at your home. If you are new to our diocese, it will introduce you to the TGA in an informative and interesting way. If you have participated in this activity over the years, the brochure will update you on how we have used your gifts to meet our common responsibilities and to be of assistance to sisters and brothers in need. If you have not participated in the TGA in past years, I hope that your review of

along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

the materials will encourage your participation in this effort.

In anticipation of your reading the TGA brochure, and to pique your interest just a bit, let me ask you to be aware of the following:

1) Our goal for this year's TGA is \$4.9 million or about 50 percent of the diocese's operating budget. Clearly, we depend a great deal on a successful TGA to carry on the daily life of our local church.

2) I can promise you that we are very careful in the use of your gift. We enjoy the wise counsel of gifted, faithful advisers who are committed to the health and well-being of our faith community. They have wonderful Gospel values. They are also quite savvy and able to stretch a dollar about as far as it will go.

3) The largest single allocation of TGA funds is to Catholic Charities. These dollars help fund regional offices in all corners of our diocese. They also serve as seed money with which Catholic Charities attracts substantial funding for programs, which benefit those who look to us for support in times of need.

4) TGA funds also provide essential sup-

port for faith-formation initiatives - the training of catechists and religious educators, and the development of programs that honor our diocesan commitment to life-long faith formation. TGA also offers substantial support with and for our youths and young adults, who now bring such life to our community and who are strong signs of hope for the future.

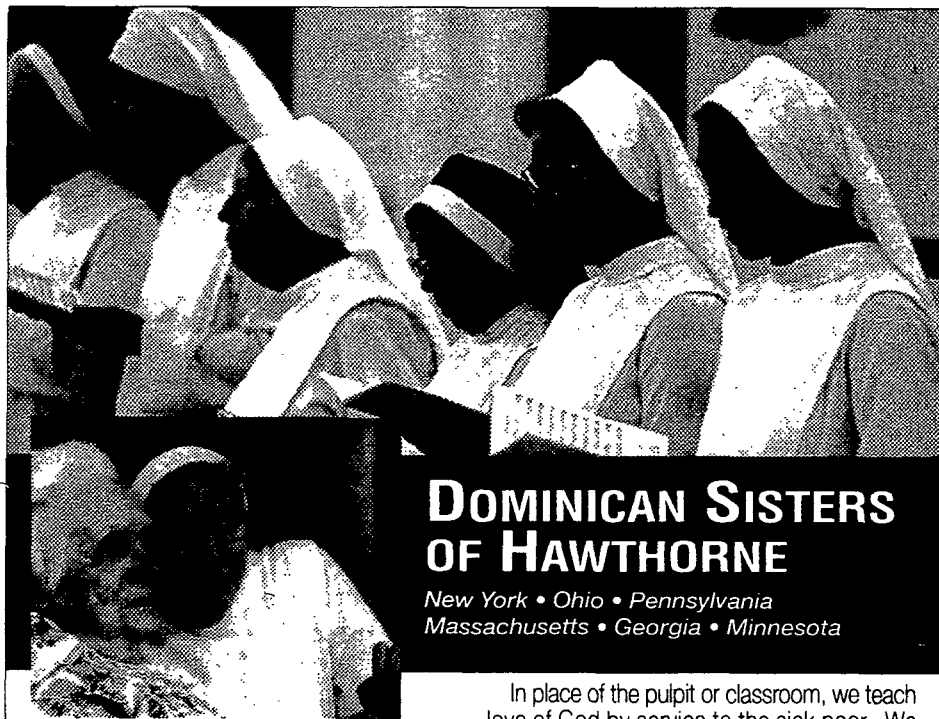
5) Your TGA dollar enhances our Catholic schools. Funding from this source covers important administrative oversight that helps a system of 50 elementary and junior high schools throughout our 12 counties to function as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

These are just a few of the many areas in which your TGA gift makes a difference in the lives of people. There are many more. You will learn of them from the brochure I mentioned and from your parish staff and volunteers.

I am very much aware that this is a challenging time. Economic conditions make it so, as do the after-effects of the devastation of September 11. However troublesome those realities may be, we cannot because of them forget or fail to support the life and mission of the church. I am confident that we will be successful in our effort because the people of this diocese have always responded to tough times with great generosity.

I express my gratitude to you for your kind attention to these words. I ask you please to pray for the success of the TGA. I also ask you to make a gift as your means allow. You have my promise that it will be put to very good use.

Peace to all.



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