

DIOCESAN NEWS

Office helps parishes to increase Mass appeal

EDITORS' NOTE: This story is the third article in an occasional series highlighting how the Thanks Giving Appeal benefits parishes.

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Do you feel you're comfortable in the church where you attend Mass regularly? Can you hear everything that's being said from the altar?

Can you see everything that's going on during a liturgical celebration?

These are among the many questions that interest the Office of Liturgy of the Diocese of Rochester's Parish Support Ministries, which is funded by the annual Thanks Giving Appeal. If you're a priest, lector, eucharistic minister, server, usher or musician at your parish, you've been touched in some way by the liturgy office's work.

Parish Support Ministries, which has seven offices, is projected to receive \$656,000 from this year's TGA. As of Nov. 21, the current TGA has received commitments of almost \$4 million from approximately 38,000 donors, according to Daniel J. Healy, diocesan director of the Office of Stewardship and Development. This year's TGA goal is \$4.931 million.

The liturgy office has two full-time employees — Joan Workmaster, director, and Virginia Miller, associate director — and is fully funded by the TGA. The office cooperates on projects of common interest with the Department of Evangelization and Catechesis, which is projected to receive \$405,000 from this year's TGA.



Karin von Voigtlander/Photo Intern

Bishop Matthew H. Clark confirms Matthew Clark, 13, (yes, that's really his name) of St. Francis Parish in Phelps, at Sacred Heart Cathedral Nov. 17.

The liturgy office helps keep Bishop Matthew H. Clark abreast of liturgical trends both nationally and internationally, and also works extensively with lay presiders and parish liturgists through ongoing workshops and training sessions. It publishes a quarterly newsletter called *Liturgy Matters*, which deals with such issues as preparing for liturgies and also reviews videos and books on liturgy. Another liturgy office



duty is helping parishes evaluate their liturgies, according to Workmaster.

"We never go in unless a parish invites us," she said, saying her office receives three to four requests for such evaluations a year.

One way the liturgy office helps parishes is by giving them a form parishioners can fill out regarding their liturgies. The form asks parishioners to rank their satisfaction with their liturgies by using a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being "disagree strongly" and 5 being "agree strongly."

The parishioners are then asked to place a number next to such statements as "The introductory prayers are simple and direct," or "The music leaders have good skills in teaching new music."

One parish that underwent an evaluation was Good Shepherd in Henrietta, according to Sue Reed, temporary pastoral administrator. Reed is also chairwoman of the 15-member all-volunteer Diocesan Liturgical Commission, which consists of parish and diocesan representatives. The commission serves as a consultative body to the diocese on liturgy questions.

Reed said her parish found that worshippers expressed overall satisfaction, but found not every aspect of the liturgy was visible in the church because of its design. The office suggested moving various liturgical actions higher up on the altar area, she said, enabling people to better

see what was going on.

The liturgy office is also valuable when it comes to helping parishes deal with such pastoral challenges as the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Reed added. An e-mail went out from the liturgy office to all parishes with suggestions for readings and hymns appropriate to the moment, she said.

Workmaster's office has received kudos from a number of parish leaders who said they have benefited from its services. For example, Basilian Father Norman C. Tanck, pastor of Christ the King Parish, Irondequoit, said his musical ministers have benefited from attending workshops recommended or put on by the liturgy office. His parish now features a much greater variety of music than in years past because its musicians have been exposed to new ideas about liturgical music, he noted.

Another duty of the liturgy office is organizing diocesan celebrations, Workmaster said. One such celebration took place Nov. 17 at Sacred Heart Cathedral, Rochester. More than 130 children, teenagers and adults were confirmed from the parishes of St. Felix, Clifton Springs and St. Francis, Phelps; Transfiguration in Pittsford; St. Joseph's in Penfield; St. John the Evangelist in Spencerport; and the Newman Community at the State University of New York College at Brockport.

Shirley Curatolo, religious education coordinator at St. John's, said her parish alone offered 95 candidates for confirmation, and she said she was greatly pleased with the confirmation celebration at Sacred Heart. It was a good experience to be with other faith communities, she said, giving the parish candidates a sense of the wider church, and it was also good to benefit from the extensive effort the diocese put into the celebration.

"Everything — the sights, the sounds, the smells — everything is just so much more exaggerated when you're in that setting," she said of the cathedral.

Margot Van Etten, campus minister at Brockport, said her community brought 12 candidates, the sons and daughters of non-student members of the Newman Community, who number about 100.

"It's a really beautiful liturgy," she said of the cathedral service. "Of course, we're a small place, and we can't do liturgy on quite that scale. ... This really helped to reemphasize that sense that you're not just part of the local church, but part of the whole church."

Nearly 1,000 ready for NCYC

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

The Diocese of Rochester will make its presence felt in numerous ways at the upcoming National Catholic Youth Conference — popularly known as "NCYC."

The conference, held every two years, will take place Dec. 6-9 in Indianapolis, Ind. Nearly 1,000 people — 800 youths and 170 adults — will make up Rochester's largest NCYC contingent ever. This will also be the biggest group from any diocese in the United States except for Indianapolis, according to Michael Theisen, diocesan director of youth ministry.

To top it all off, the conference's 24,000 participants will attend a closing Mass in the RCA Dome on Dec. 9. The homilist? Rochester's own Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

"I'm sure I've never spoken to that many people before," Bishop Clark remarked.

The bishop explained that his role as the U.S. bishops' episcopal liaison to the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry — along with "the fine turnout of youth" from the Rochester Diocese — likely factored into his selection as homilist.

"Hope For the Crossroads" is the theme for the event, which will feature numerous workshops, liturgies and other opportunities for prayer. Highlights will include appearances by such national celebrities as Matt Smith from MTV's "The Real World" and Miss America 2000, Angela Perez Baraquio; a service project on the importance of literacy in Catholic social teaching; and a 350-member Youth Congress that will dialogue with 50 Catholic bishops — including Bishop Clark — on vocations.

Tabita Torres is one of two teens from the Rochester Diocese to be selected for the Youth Congress. She feels it's important to stress "that vocations isn't just a priest or nun for youth. It's being a lector, part of the choir."

Greg Barbieri, the other Youth Congress member, is an NCYC veteran. He said he's looking forward to a spiritual experience similar to the powerful one he had at the 1999 conference in St. Louis, Mo.

"It was at that point when I seriously considered my faith and decided that I really believed in Jesus Christ and that I was going to do my best to live for him," said Greg, 17, from St. Margaret Mary Church in Apalachin.

Meanwhile, this will be Tabita's first trip to the NCYC. "I'm really excited to be seeing thousands and thousands of people. It's hard to find that many together, saying Jesus is the answer," said Tabita, 17, from Rochester's Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward.

It's this kind of excitement that has helped make the NCYC such a popular draw for teens in this diocese, Theisen said.

"They come back with such enthusiasm and excitement for their faith, and obviously that gets communicated," he said.

Theisen said that parishes have been planning for the NCYC for approximately one year, holding organizational meetings as well as fundraising activities to defray travel and hotel costs. Bishop Clark lauded the parishes that have actively embraced the fundraisers, saying, "Young people generally don't have that kind of money. This doesn't happen without a lot of support from pastors and parish communities."



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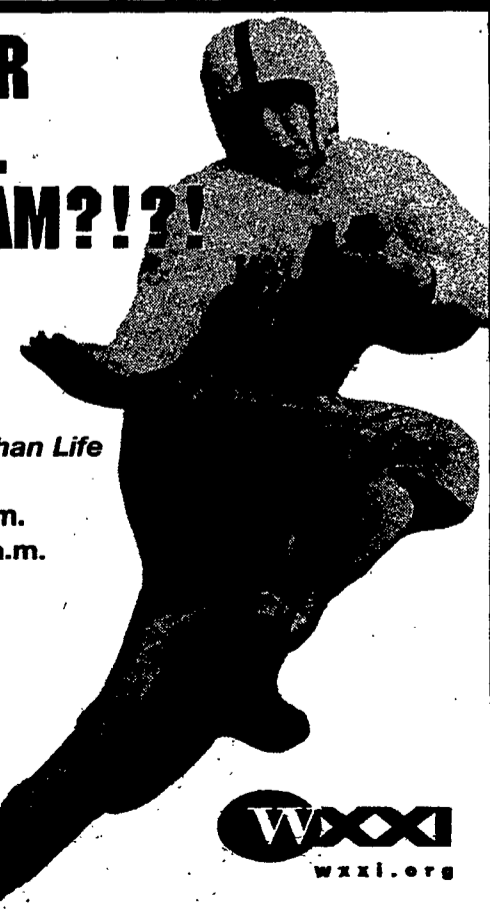
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