

Christmas Appeal raises \$53,296 for diocesan charities

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

Despite a tough economic year, the 32nd-annual *Catholic Courier*/Catholic Charities Christmas Appeal raised more than 97 percent of its goal.

According to Judy Taylor, communications manager for diocesan Catholic Charities, the appeal raised \$53,296 during the donation period that began Thanksgiving weekend and ended Jan. 31. Though the final figure fell slightly short of the campaign's \$55,000 goal, Taylor said it was a very good year when factoring in the nation's economy, especially after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

"I always marvel, so close on the heels of the Thanks Giving Appeal, that people can be generous again," Taylor said. "And this

year, with the Sept. 11 tragedies, people have been more than big-hearted in responding to need. People dug deeper, I'm sure."

"I think when we broke 90 percent, at that point we could say we did very well. I'm very happy," said Donna Stubbings, *Courier* circulation manager, who also serves as chairwoman of the appeal.

The total represents \$50,904 in individual donations, as well as monies collected through various fund-raising activities. Stubbings said about 876 individuals had made donations, compared to 987 in 2000-01 when an overall total of \$55,655 was raised.

"People were '9-11ed out,'" Stubbings said, speculating that many would-be Christmas Appeal donors had probably al-



ready committed substantial funds to disaster relief efforts in New York City; Washington, D.C.; and Pennsylvania. Stubbings said she expects many former donors to resurface for next year's Christmas Appeal.

Christmas Appeal money is allocated to emergency funds for the following diocesan agencies: Catholic Family Center; Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes; Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier; Catholic Charities of Livingston County outreach; Catholic Charities Community Services; Bishop Sheen Ecumenical Housing Foundation; and diocesan Urban Services.

"We know we have twice as many requests coming in for emergency services as we do funds (at Catholic Charities agencies). Christmas Appeal allows the agencies to respond where there is no source for re-

ferral," Taylor said.

This year's campaign included a series of *Courier* articles about a woman who had suffered a stroke-like attack and received Christmas Appeal money for household items and food; a young man whose fee was paid so he could take a required fingerprinting test for a job he was seeking; and a single mother of two children who was able to purchase a used refrigerator after her old one had broken.

Although the Christmas Appeal has concluded for 2001-02, Stubbings said that donations are always welcomed and will be counted toward the 2002-03 appeal. Checks can be made payable to "Christmas Appeal" and sent to Christmas Appeal, c/o *Catholic Courier*, P.O. Box 24379, Rochester, NY 14624. Please include your name, address, city/town, state and ZIP code.

Catholic Courier

DIocese of Rochester, New York ■ VOL. 113 NO. 19 ■ THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2002 ■ 75¢ ■ 16 PAGES

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Bishop Gregory makes his mark

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Nov. 13 election of Bishop Wilton D. Gregory as conference president could be seen as the culmination of "firsts" in his life.

Bishop Gregory, 54, USCCB vice president for the past three years, was chosen on the bishops' first ballot, becoming the first African-American and the first Catholic convert ever to be elected president of the bishops' conference. Not to mention the fact that when he was ordained an auxiliary bishop of Chicago in 1983 at age 36, he was the youngest bishop at that time in the U.S. Catholic Church.

The new bishops' president holds a doctorate in liturgy from Rome's Pontifical Liturgical Institute and has written extensively on the subject, particularly on liturgy in the African-American community.

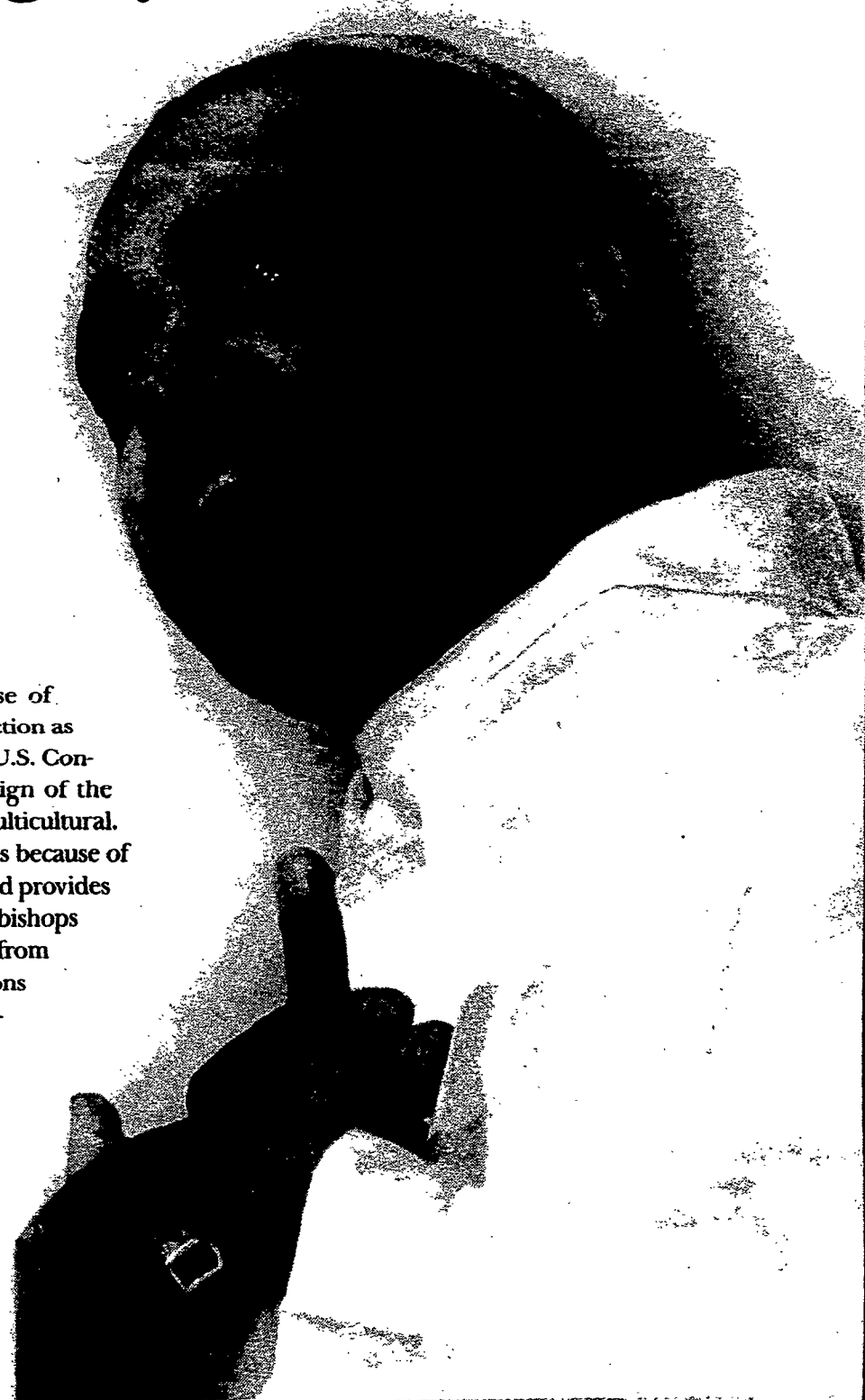
Bishop Gregory, who heads the Diocese of Belleville, Ill., hopes the attention to his election as the first African-American president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops is seen as a sign of the church's commitment to be inclusive and multicultural.

But he also hopes the attention he receives because of his race serves as a tool for evangelization and provides a reason for people to listen to what the U.S. bishops have to say on a whole spectrum of issues — from their commitment to Africa to their positions on immigration, school choice and debt reduction.

"It raises the possibility that in the secular world the Catholic Church is perceived for that which we are — a haven for truth and for justice," said Bishop Gregory, one of 11 active black U.S. Catholic bishops.

In the end, he hopes the picture of him that emerges is more textured

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