

Commitment to faith links campaign leaders

By Jerry Zufelt
EDITOR

GREENSBURG — The three couples serving as lay leaders of the “Today’s Challenge ~ Tomorrow’s Hope” Capital and Endowment Campaign for the Diocese of Greensburg say they accepted the invitation to take on that responsibility because of a deep commitment to their Catholic faith.

They were invited to take on leadership roles because of their proven dedication to their parishes and the diocese.

The general co-chairs of the campaign are John and Kim Dolan, parishioners of St. Bernard of Clairvaux Parish, Indiana; Michael and Janice Walker, parishioners of Holy Family Parish, Latrobe; and L. Richard and Christine Zappone, parishioners of Blessed Sacrament Cathedral Parish, Greensburg.

The three couples are motivated by several factors, including specific aspects of the campaign case for support and the diocese’s comprehensive planning process the past four-plus years.

Michael Walker, who is chairman of the parish finance council and serves on the parish pastoral council, sees the major benefit of the campaign “not as financial, but as spiritual.”

Noting that he and Janice are also co-chairs of their parish campaign, and Janice is the campaign secretary, Michael said, “I believe the campaign is about answering God’s call, and we must faithfully answer this call and present it to others.”

The Dolans also see their commitment as part of something bigger than themselves.



Campaign Highlights

- The “Today’s Challenge ~ Tomorrow’s Hope” Capital and Endowment Campaign for the Diocese of Greensburg has passed the halfway mark with nearly \$23 million in gifts and pledges made on an overall goal of \$45 million.
- Group Two’s 24 parishes currently conducting their campaigns are almost halfway to their \$15.4 million goal with nearly \$7 million in gifts and pledges.
- More than 5,500 people have made gifts and pledges to the campaign.
- There are 35 parishes that will begin their individual campaigns in early 2010.

Totals are from the diocesan campaign office as of Oct. 9, 2009.

“We have been blessed, and it is our responsibility as good stewards to give back to our church and community,” John said.

The Dolans have done that over the years. John is chairman of the parish finance council, and Kim serves on the parish pastoral council and has been on the board of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Greensburg for five years.

For the Zappones, commitment to the church is part of a long family tradition. “Our family has been in the parish

since the 1860s,” Richard said. “We stand on the shoulders of previous generations of leaders, and we recognize our obligations as the current generation to assist in the funding of resources and explaining the needs for the future of the diocese.”

He praised the diocesan planning process. “We were very impressed by Bishop Brandt’s process of listening to our priests and thousands of laypeople,” he said. “This resulted in a very compelling statement of future needs and resources to meet them.”

Their commitment to the Catholic Church, their parishes and diocese started long before their involvement in the campaign. The Dolans, Walkers and Zappones have been involved in many Catholic causes over the years.

The Dolans are supporters of their parish and St. Bernard School in Indiana along with Catholic Charities. The Walkers are supporters of the diocese’s Scholarship Partners Foundation, Christ the Divine Teacher School, Latrobe, and Saint Francis University, Loretto (Michael’s alma mater). In addition to their parish, the Zappones have supported Aquinas Academy, Greensburg Central Catholic High School and St. Anne Home, all in Greensburg, Saint Vincent Seminary and College, Latrobe, along with education and health care causes in the Holy Land.

All see their leadership roles as supporting the bishop by explaining the campaign and its future benefits to the diocese to others.

Matthew Stoessel, managing director of The Catholic Foundation for the Diocese of Greensburg, said that in addition to being visible leaders and representing different



John and Kim Dolan



Janice and Michael Walker



L. Richard and Christine Zappone

areas of the diocese, the lay leaders all “represent the next generation of Catholic leaders.”

“They are excellent ambassadors for this campaign,” he said. “They are openly supportive of the Catholic Church. We are blessed to have them as active parishioners in our diocese.”

Everyday Faith

Catechetical Master Plan: Preparing for, celebrating sacraments

In outlining the catechetical responsibilities of parents in his pastoral letter “The Transmission of Faith in the Present Culture,” Bishop Lawrence E. Brandt writes: “Like the bishop and priests, parents share responsibility for the formation of their children in the Catholic faith. During the Sacrament of Baptism, the celebrant states to the parents and godparents: ‘On your part you must make it your constant care to bring your child up in the practice of the faith. See that the divine life which God gives your child is kept safe from the poison of sin, to grow always stronger in your child’s heart.’ This exhortation emphasizes the primary and unique role of the parents in the faith formation of their children.”

One of the major initiatives of the diocese’s Catechetical Master Plan is raising the normative age for reception of the sacrament of confirmation in the Diocese of Greensburg to about age 13 or grade 8 by the 2017-18 catechetical year.

This transition will be a gradual one. The transition period will involve only those young people currently in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2. This change in the age of confirmation, as well as the development of a catechetical curriculum for grades pre-K to 12, will affect more than the sacramental preparation for confirmation. It, in fact, affects all

that is done in forming the faith of our young people and their families no matter where that formation takes place, be it in our Catholic schools, parishes or homes.

In 1996, the diocesan Department of Education and Spiritual Formation released “Journey of a Lifetime,” a document that outlined the process of immediate preparation for the sacraments of reconciliation, first Eucharist and confirmation. Concerning the preparation for confirmation, we read in “Journey of a Lifetime”: “In the past, preparing children for the sacraments was the job of the religious education program in the Catholic school or CCD program. This program often focused on education about the sacraments, rather than formation in the sacramental life of the church. The primary educators of children in the faith became the religion teachers in the classroom setting, rather than parents in the context of the domestic church.”

The document also states: “A primary emphasis must be placed on the parents’ commitment to living their faith. Parents teach by daily example and lifestyle choices. A religious education program should provide resources and support for



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these parental efforts of faith formation.”

So what does the church mean when it uses the term “immediate preparation?” Immediate preparation takes place directly before the celebration of the sacraments. It is a period in which those preparing for the celebration of a sacrament and their families enter into a more intense spiritual preparation. This includes more interior reflection than catechetical instruction in order to prepare the minds and hearts of those who will receive the sacrament and their families.

“Journey of a Lifetime” outlines two immediate preparation family workshops for the sacraments of reconciliation, first Eucharist and confirmation.

The workshops for the sacrament of reconciliation cover the story of the Prodigal Son and the experience of forgiveness through the sacrament of reconciliation. The workshops for first Eucharist cover the Eucharist as a shared meal and the meaning and actions of the Eucharistic Prayer. The confirmation workshops cover the symbol of oil, the gesture of anointing in the sacrament and the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Finally, “Journey of a Lifetime” lists

the “General Principles: Sacrament Preparation for Children of Catechetical Age.” A number of these principles outline the immediate preparation process for the sacraments of reconciliation and include:

- Immediate preparation for the sacraments of baptism, reconciliation, Eucharist and confirmation takes place in the home parish of the child.

- Immediate preparation for the sacraments takes place in a family context at a time separate from and outside of the religion classroom.

- Catholic schools and parish faith formation programs support the home parish of the child in its efforts to prepare children and their families for the celebration of the sacraments.

It is imperative that we understand that the faith is formed primarily in the context of the family and that the job of Catholic schools and parish faith formation programs is to assist families in fulfilling these responsibilities. Preparation for the sacraments, as well as the celebration of the sacraments, concludes at the home parish of the child in a family context.

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