AAA’s ‘light’ offers hope to those in need

BY MICHAEL C. GABRIELE
Editor

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Supported by the generosity of the faithful, last year the AAA donations registered a 2.5-percent increase compared with the previous year—despite the sluggish economy. This “modest” year-to-year gain is viewed as a major accomplishment during the current period of high unemployment and lingering financial insecurity, when many charitable organizations have suffered significant declines in their donations.

The hope is that the same spirit of compassion for those in need will illuminate this year’s AAA campaign, which has adopted the theme of “Come Be My Light” to promote its fundraising efforts.

The theme for the 2012 AAA was inspired by the title of Mother Teresa’s 2007 book, which published a collection of reflections and “Private Writings by the Saint of Calcutta.” Carla Repollet, executive director of the archdiocesan Office of Stewardship and Development, said the book shows how Mother Teresa came to a deeper awareness of how she was “a light” sent by God to help others.

“To be a ‘light’ is to live out the faith in practice,” Archbishop John J. Myers stated in the 2012 AAA video, which was distributed to the 219 archdiocesan parishes earlier this month. “Through good deeds and acts we come out of the darkness and into God’s light and, in turn, we become the beacons of hope for those in need.”

The video points out how contributions to the AAA assist and protect the homeless, the unborn, the young and the elderly. Funds also go to support the work of parishes and the three seminaries in the archdiocese. Last year Catholic Charities, which receives funds from the AAA, helped turn, we become the beacons of hope for those in need.”

The AAA’s ‘light’ offers hope to those in need

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Women, men

Continued from page 1
and beyond, will be at Seton Hall University in South Orange. Because seating is limited, organizers urge early registration. As in the past, both events will include Spanish language tracks.

This year’s theme for the women’s Lenten Day of Reflection is “Rise Up and Walk—Plugging in to the Power of Grace.” It will,

explained commission chairwoman Pamela M. Swartzberg, J.D., L.C.H.S., “energize women to plug into their faith and more fully realize the gift of grace in their lives.” The Day of Reflection will also, she stressed, provide “a witness of faith and recognition of the critical role of women in the Catholic Church and society.”

For its gathering, the Men’s Commission has chosen as its theme “Come, Follow Me.” Stressing that the day will “offer a

structure of fellowship and support to deepen men’s faith and relationships with Jesus Christ, their families and society,” Jorge Repollet, commission chairman, said the conference is “a way to foster spiritual renewal and to help men grow in their relationship with the Lord. We will focus on bringing men together to form a brotherhood that goes beyond the conference.”

Featured at the Women’s Day of Reflection will be nationally recognized authors and EWTN contributors Dr. Gregory and Lisa Popcak. They will be joined by Sister Marilyn Minter, C.S.S.F., associate director of the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

For the first time this year

Matrimonios Unidos en Cristo, a lay movement in the Archdiocese of Newark. The other speaker is Martha Fernandez-Sardina, director of the Office of Evangelization in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. Speaking at the Men’s Conference will be a cleric familiar to those who call the Church of Newark home—Most Rev. Arthur J. Serratelli, a Newark native and former archdiocesan auxiliary bishop, who has served as the Bishop of the Paterson Diocese since July 2004. Also addressing the men of the archdiocese will be Father James Martin, S.J., author and cultural editor of America, the national Catholic magazine.

Joining Bishop Serratelli and Fr. Martin will be Allen Hunt. Raised as a Methodist, Hunt was pastor of a church with 8,000 members when he began a spiritual journey that culminated with his conversion of Catholicism.

Taking the podium in the Spanish track will be Saulo de Amor and Levantate y Auda. They are recognized authors and EWTN contributors.

Sisters Cecilia M. Momen (l) and Regina Aydore (r) in Princess Anne, Maryland.