

Development leader of 12 years to leave archdiocesan post

The executive director of development for the Archdiocese of Baltimore will be leaving his post of 12 years in late July to focus full time on a consulting business he established several years ago to help parishes and dioceses throughout the United States.

Hershey, Pa., native Tom Sonni, 47, joined the archdiocese a week after Pope John Paul II's historic visit to Baltimore in 1995 and leaves behind a long list of accomplishments during his time in office.

"During his 12 years here in Baltimore, Tom has successfully implemented the Heritage of Hope, the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal and the Partners in Excellence programs," said Bishop W. Francis Malooly, western vicar and vicar general for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. "This year the CLA took in excess of \$6 million," the first time in its 16-year history it has exceeded its financial goal.

The Ellicott City resident is quick to point out that while he is proud of the accomplishments achieved during his tenure, he is by no means solely responsible for the successes.

"It's certainly a team effort," he said. "I have a very good team of people in my department. We're well poised to continue to serve the church for many years to come."

A 1982 graduate of Pennsylvania State University, Mr. Sonni worked as a fundraising and development consultant for several years before becoming the director of development for the Diocese of Harrisburg, Pa., in 1990.

"In a way, I'm sort of going back to my roots, but now my attention will be focused on parishes and dioceses," said Mr. Sonni, who will operate his consulting firm, Greater Mission LLC, out of his Ellicott City home for at least a little while.

His company will - among other things - help parishes, ministries and dioceses with their capital campaigns and endowment strategies, Christian stewardship, staff

building and constituent motivation, according to the firm's Web site, www.greatermission.com.

"I am excited about Greater Mission and its potential to help the church advance its work of evangelization and service in the Lord's name," said Father Timothy B. Brown, S.J., provincial of The Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus in Roland Park. "I have known Tom for seven years and have witnessed his deep commitment to the Catholic faith and the mission of the church."

Though Mr. Sonni's last official day with the archdiocese will be July 20, Bishop Malooly said the parishioner of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Ellicott City, will work with him, Cardinal William H. Keeler, the archdiocesan management team and the two other auxiliary bishops to make the transition smooth for the Baltimore See.

"Tom has also offered to assist us as a consultant on our various projects," Bishop Malooly said. "I am grateful for that offer."