Father DiOrio's "Surprise" 80th Birthday
Young at Heart, and Going Strong!

As Father DiOrio once said, "Remember the power of a thought." In May 2010, the Apostolate staff, with the public's support, decided to host a surprise birthday party at Wright's Farm Restaurant in Harrisville, Rhode Island. The event was planned for Saturday, July 17, 2010. The restaurant is situated on numerous acres of lush green land, surrounded by woods and mountains. To bring these plans to fruition required the cooperative and collective effort of a large group of skilled, talented, and dedicated people.

First, invitations were printed, folded, and put in sealed envelopes by the printer (this ensured that information would not be visible on the office desks). Second, a mass mailing to the public was done immediately. Third, a balloon man and singer were brought in to make the day extra special. Fourth, the appropriate awards were arranged. Fifth, a head table was set up for Father Ralph, family and clergy. Then, a cake and cookies were ordered, and we were ready to go.

Shortly thereafter, numerous responses rolled in on a daily basis. Before we knew it, we had close to 500 people who had responded affirmatively from all over North America. People were planning to come from as far west as California, as far north as Canada, as far south as Texas, and from all over the East Coast.

The day of the party arrived, and what a beautiful, sunny day it was! The doors at the back of the banquet hall opened at 11 a.m. The Apostolate had its first challenge, which was to get all the cars parked, and almost 500 people inside the banquet room, within 45 minutes. With the help of volunteer ministry traffic coordinators, yes, we did it! At 12 noon, Father DiOrio promptly arrived, along with three other people dressed in Boy Scout uniforms, truly believing he was attending a scheduled Boy Scout event. Even the restaurant management team helped convince Father Ralph this Boy Scout meeting was authentic by posting a bogus "Boy Scout event" sign at the entrance of the driveway.

When Father DiOrio entered through the front door of the banquet room at noon, he was greeted by hundreds of burgundy and gold balloons, six handsomely dressed 4th Degree Knights of Columbus of the Bishop O'Reilly Assembly of Worcester, Massachusetts, along with well-rehearsed rounds of "Surprise!" and "Happy Birthday!" He was then escorted to the floor of the banquet room where the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and the Knights of Columbus presented him with his first Humanitarian Award of the day. After being seated, the welcoming

and gratitude speeches by Dr. Karsberg began. Soon thereafter, Mr. Michael Germain, Worcester City Councilman, presented Father DiOrio the Key to the City of Worcester, Massachusetts. A verbal tribute by Dr. Karsberg then followed, and at 12:30 the famous Frank Sinatra impersonator, Mr. Michael Dutra, began to perform. Simultaneously, bountiful platters of chicken, macaroni, salad, and french fries were served at expansive, family-style tables.

In the afternoon, Father was also surprised with a Global Humanitarian Award presented by Mr. Thomas Lamberti, and Father Albert DiIanni followed by giving Father DiOrio a Literary Achievement award. The Seaman family, close and personal friends of Father DiOrio, presented him with a personal gift as well: Father DiOrio, being a star in his own right, was presented with documentation of a celestial star that has been named in his honor. Yes, it was a day to remember indeed. Priests and lay people all joyously took turns with the microphone, sharing and contributing to this fabulous festivity.

For those of you who could not join us, it is our hope that this brief description of the party, along with the photos of the event, will give you a glimpse into this once-in-a-lifetime celebration.

A thank you is in order to all of you wonderful people who attended, kept the party a secret, and sent Father DiOrio well wishes, along with the many, many birthday cards and gifts he received. Your presence will be imprinted in Father Ralph's heart and mind for years to come. May God bless you in a special way, and we at the Apostolate will offer up your heartfelt intentions, whatever they may be, on a daily basis when we gather for our daily prayers at our Apostolate chapel. Once again, we wish to express our gratitude for your loyalty and support of his ministerial endeavors over the many years you have known him.