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Christmas, 1980

My dear Sisters and Brothers:

Please accept my sincere greetings for the Christmas Season and prayerful best wishes for 1981. The love of the Father is made known to us and is ever renewed in Jesus, our Savior and brother. As we celebrate the Christmas Feast, the prayer of the whole Church is that in His light we might come to know better the Father's love and our own dignity and high calling.

A world torn by strife contemplates the Prince of Peace and hungers for the reconciliation which is His gift. A world in which so many are poor in body and spirit turns anew to the poor one of Nazareth to rediscover the richness of His person and knows better its own worth and destiny.

A world which so often lives only for self and seeks happiness in self fulfillment pauses to be challenged by the one who lived for others and who gave all He had, even his life for us. The challenges of Christmas are not easy ones, but they are alive always in the hearts of those who celebrate the day in faith. Jesus never ceases to speak with tenderness to those He calls to Himself.

For that reason the Church speaks this prayer in the Mass at Dawn on Christmas:

Father,
We are filled with new light by the coming
of your word among us.
May the light of faith shine in our
words and actions.
May we be one with the whole Church in this prayer as we
celebrate the Feast of Christmas.

Your brother in Christ,
Matthew H. Clark
+ Most Reverend Matthew H. Clark, D.D.
Bishop of Rochester