



Bishop's Office

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER
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Christmas, 1983

My dear people:

As the Christmas Season dawns upon us again, our minds turn to the timeless message of God's love for his people. In our churches, we will hear proclaimed the story of Christmas. Our minds and hearts will re-live the journey of faith undertaken by Mary and Joseph. The Christmas creches in our homes and churches will create a sense of oneness with the Infant Savior.

Our gaze will last but a moment. The proclamation of the Gospel story will be silenced. Our hearts will rise and fall with the emotions of the day and the season. Jesus will, however, live on.

This Christmas, I would like to ask you to think seriously about the message of Christmas: God's love for his people. How do you live that out in your relationships with other people? How can you better exemplify the values of this sacred season: How can we extend the beauty of this season throughout the year?

If we only find ourselves caught up in the emotion of the moment, we will find ourselves putting our hearts away with the Christmas decorations in the annual Christmas "clean-up." If, however, we see beyond the tinsel, music and figurines to the true spirit of the Season, we will experience the quiet peace of Our Lord's all-abiding presence. This is the peace bought by the Prince of Peace.

My dear friends, please accept my warm wishes for a Christmas Season of family joy and celebration; a season when we might unite in common praise and thanks of our God; a season which will so captivate our hearts and minds that we will go forward to bring Good News: "the Word was made flesh and dwells among us."

Your brother in Christ,

Matthew H. Clark
+Matthew H. Clark
Bishop of Rochester

His Love Endures Forever

Along The Way

With Bishop Matthew H. Clark



Sunday evening:

More often than not I work on this column on Sunday evening after the events of the day. It's a relaxing time. The comfort of clothes meant for relaxing, peaceful music and the quiet evening atmosphere of the house all contribute to the ability and desire to write a few words to you about what's been happening in my life.

The only prop I use is my appointment calendar which I use to refresh my memory about what has happened in the past week and what will occur during the week ahead. It's not something I do just to get ideas for this column; it's also one way I have found to respond to the call a bishop has to pray always for his people.

Until now, I have written in pen on a yellow legal paper. I work on it as I go along — crossing out, adding, changing words — and when I have finished I write it again as neatly as I can on the yellow legal pad. It goes to the Courier-Journal on Monday morning in that form. If you have ever seen my handwriting, you know that I have been asking more of the Courier than should be asked of

anyone. Tonight, I am typing and will try to do that from now on.

I may be conscious of all this tonight because I didn't do the column last week — and I missed the experience. This has always been billed as an occasional piece but the fact is that I enjoy doing it each week.

● Thanks for your prayer and fasting for peace this week. I am convinced that something very important is happening among us when so many persons of all descriptions respond so generously to invitations like that one.

The comments — written and oral — which I have received about the day were rich in their variety. In my next column I'll share a sampling of them with you.

My own day at the Mercy Prayer Center was a grace to me. I thank the sisters for their hospitality and you for the support of your prayers.

● These last days before Christmas can be hectic but let me encourage you to keep a quiet place in your heart and a calm moment in your day to remember what the motion is

all about.

We're meant to know more deeply the faithful and full love our Father offers us in Jesus Christ. We're called to think about life and hope and reconciliation in a world in which so many have a daily experience death, despair and enmity.

Please accept the Christmas feast as a gift which allows us to recognize and be unafraid of our own poverty so that we can be filled with the strength which comes when we know that we are loved with a love that will never end.

I'll be following a schedule which has become my Christmas pattern since I have been in Rochester: Midnight Mass at Sacred Heart Cathedral, a morning Mass at the Monroe County jail followed by a trip across the state for a family celebration in Waterford.

Please pray for me during these last days of Advent. You can be sure of my own for —

A blessed Christmas and for —
Peace.