

Along the way

Setting goals for the '90s and beyond

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

The staff of our *Catholic Courier* has chosen an interesting theme for our year-end issue — hopes for the future. I am pleased at the opportunity to address hopes for the future of our church in this week's column.

I treated that same theme in my keynote address at the symposium titled "The Wisdom of Women" held recently in Arlington, Va. At that time I sketched out some significant pastoral issues that — in my opinion — need a deeper and more peaceful settling in the Catholic community. Here I want to share some hopes I have for our own diocese for the next few years.

In order to do that in a brief way and to draw on the wisdom of many sisters and brothers, let me share with you the current draft of a statement of mission and goals we have been developing for general use in our diocese through 1993.

Our Priests' Council has taken the lead in the development of this statement. Our

Diocesan Pastoral Council, Stewardship Council and division directors have also made significant contributions to the statement.

This process has been ongoing for several months and it is now near completion. As you read the following draft, remember that while it is close to being finished, it is still subject to final revision. And remember as well that while a statement of this kind is meant to give clear guidance in our life together, it can not capture the full scope of our life at any one time, nor is it beyond further revision as the needs of our community change.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; therefore he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, and release to prisoners, to announce a year of favor from the Lord (Luke 4).

We will joyfully embrace our baptismal call to worship God, to preach the good

news of Christ, to build upon our community of faith and hope in the Holy Spirit, and to serve those in need. As pilgrims nourished by the Eucharist for our journey of faith, we will join with other churches and with all those who seek harmony within our human family, thereby advancing the reign of God. Continuing our diocese's century-old tradition of courage and creativity, and responding to the Second Vatican Council's call for ongoing conversion of the Church, we will strive to meet the needs of our community in this time and this place.

Interpreting the signs of the time, we have set forth these primary goals for the next two years:

- to convene a broad-based Synod to chart our future course.
- to create comprehensive faith development programs for all ages and cultures.
- to provide human care services and to advocate for social reform.

We will joyfully embrace our baptismal call to worship God, to preach the good news of Christ, to build upon our community of faith and hope in the Holy Spirit, and to serve those in need.

- to provide well-qualified pastoral ministers to serve our faith communities.

I hope that when you read through that draft, it sparked some ideas, invited you to question its meaning, and helped you to organize some of your own reflections on our church and on what you would like us to become. I look forward to completing this process and inviting you to gather around our major goals through 1993.

In the meantime I wish you a Happy New Year.

Peace to all.

Christians should work for the day when church is all inclusive

**By Father Thomas P. Mull
Diocesan Liturgical Commission**

The feast of Epiphany sings of the splendor of life renewed in the incarnated Jesus. From the first strains of Isaiah's readings "Rise up in splendor, Jerusalem! Your light has come," we experience the depth of the joy of this salvation.

The feast chants a hymn of inclusive gathering: "Nations shall walk by your light, and kings in your shining radiance. Raise your eyes and look about; they all gather and come to you: Your sons come from afar, and your daughters in the arms of their nurses."

The second reading speaks of the inclusiveness of Jesus' message: "It is no less than this: in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are coheirs with the Jews, members of the same body and sharers of the promise through the preaching of the gospel" (Eph. 3:5-6). St. Paul leaves nothing to the



imagination in this statement.

Jesus came for all people. His message is to be preached to all people. His words are meant to be spirit and life to people sorely in need of vindication and justice. Paul is also clear that this message is not going to be miraculously revealed.

It is the mission of the Christian com-

munity to preach and live this message as Jesus lived it. Taken in the image of today's Epiphany celebration, the Christian community itself is called to be light in the world mirroring the light of Christ. But how is this to be done?

Our own bishop has given us a clue. In a recent presentation, he stated: "The church is most alive when she is expansive and inclusive, when she stands in dialogue with the time and the culture in which she is ennobled, when she searches for truth wherever it may be found. The church is at her best when she finds room for all manner of diversity, disallowing only those points of view or directions which deny the central mysteries of our faith."

This statement is a challenge because it necessarily demands an openness to all people, to all gifts and to all talents. It says there is no place for prejudice within the Christian community nor is there the possibility for one to fail to recognize the dignity of each human person.

It calls for an openness to men and

women with a recognition of their unique gifts and talents. It challenges believers to be open to the power of the Holy Spirit in such a way that the Holy Spirit leads and guides and is not to be manipulated or coerced. In other words, it calls for a church of inclusivity.

Yet, the message of the day is not exclusivity by one of invitation. All people were invited to do homage to the Savior. The light had come into the world for all to see. It was to burn brightly from generation to generation in all nations, continents, wherever humans would gather.

The preface of Epiphany capsulizes the message: "Today you revealed in Christ your eternal plan of salvation and showed him as the light of all peoples. Now that his glory has shone among us you have renewed humanity in his immortal image."

This promise of immortality is a promise that knows no race, creed or age. It is a promise which we, the church, are to extend to all peoples. We are challenged then to dream, to be open to the Spirit and to search for the truth "wherever it may be found."

Pray that the day will come when barriers will fall and we will truly be that Church of Epiphany: "Then you shall be radiant at what you see, your heart will throb and overflow" (Is. 60:5). It is that day for which we should long. It is that day for which we should work. As the Eucharistic Prayer of Reconciliation states: "In that new world where the fullness of your peace will be revealed, gather people of every race, language and way of life to share in the one eternal banquet." It is that day when we become most truly church.

CENACLE OFFERS SPECIAL EVENTS

- Jan. 7 & Jan. 21 Evening of Freedom** - An ongoing support system twice-a-month, focusing on the spirituality of the 12-Steps. Meets 1st and 3rd Monday's of each month, 7:00-9:00p.m. Sr. Ellen Frawley and Sr. Margie Mayk.
- Jan. 10, 17 & 24 Evenings for Parents of Teenagers** A three-week series for parents of teenagers intended to provide input, sharing and support for uncertain times. Topics for discussion: parenting and unconditional love, self-esteem of parent and child, setting and affirming rules and guidelines, and decision making. Conducted by Don and Rosemarie Schaeffer, Andy and Kathy Zona, and Sr. Margie Mayk, r.c. Thursday evenings from 7:00-9:00p.m.
- Jan. 11-13 Runaway Weekend** A retreat weekend for women; time to come together to pray, to reflect, to share. Themes: Jesus' attitude toward women, Women's attitudes toward Jesus, Mary of Nazareth ... single parent, Mary of Bethany and Martha ... doing and being. Srs. Gina Terrazas and Annette Mattie, r.c.
- Jan. 13 Day of Prayer for Widows and Widowers** (11:00a.m.-4:00p.m.) Mrs. Helen Patsynski and Sr. Margie Mayk.
- Jan. 25-27 The Life of Thomas Merton** A weekend retreat in which Msgr. William Shannon will share with you Merton's reflections on Spirituality, Solitude, Church, Community and Technology as they emerge from his life-story.
- Jan. 31 Establishing Boundaries with the Enablers in your Life** Conducted by Sr. Mary Sullivan, r.c.

All events are open to men and women of all faiths

 Cenacle

Center for Spiritual Renewal

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Rochester, New York 14607

For further information and

reservations please call

THE MINISTRY OFFICE:

(716) 271-8755

It is not on the menu at any soup kitchen, nor inventoried in any food cupboard. No one has specifically asked for it when seeking emergency assistance from Social Ministry's agencies. Yet "hope" is one of the most valuable gifts the people of the diocese can, and do offer to the poor and marginalized in our community.

This gift of hope is inherent in every monetary donation made to the various programs coordinated by Social Ministry.

The recent Christmas Appeal is a fine example. Christmas Appeal funds provide emergency assistance to neighbors in *desperate* need. More than 1,100 donors have generously contributed \$50,000 to date. These gifts are, indeed, the wonderful gift of hope for individuals and families who have none in reserve.

In a few weeks Operation Breadbox begins. This Lenten program of prayer, study and almsgiving keeps us in touch with the Third World. We walk with our hungry brothers and sisters in developing countries. We assist their efforts to feed *themselves*, and not just for today, but for tomorrow as well. To envision tomorrow is to hope. Financial support of Operation Breadbox development projects makes that vision a reality.

The Campaign for Human Development is another hope-filled program. There is no future in poverty. The dollars collected in this April campaign empower the self-help efforts of poor and low-income groups who seek social change. That support embodies the Hope for a future of justice.

Love, expressed by our diocesan community of faith, always generates hope. It is our commitment to faith, hope and love that will assist us to promote a world of justice and peace.

Father John A. Firpo

Director

Diocesan Division of Social Ministry

I want to help the needy of the Diocese of Rochester.
Here is my contribution to the 1990 Christmas Appeal.

MAIL TO:

Christmas Appeal, Diocese of Rochester
1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, New York 14624

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

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