

# Synod, like Advent, calls us to new life

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Ever since the conclusion of our General Synod, I have been thinking about the five themes identified by that body. My questions have included: What do they really mean? What is the interconnection among them? What do we need to do to bring them to life as fully as we would like? What are our people's concrete life concerns that gave rise to these hopes for our community?

Such reflections are at the heart of the work of our Implementation Commission — a work soon to be shared by the Analysis Teams that will be working with commission members. We can all be grateful for the commitment and competence these men and women bring to the task.

Important as their work will be to our community, it also is critical to our Synod follow-up that we all stay alive to the Holy Spirit, open to the Spirit's guidance and wisdom in our lives. If there is a single, core insight that has guided the work of our Implementation Commission, it is this: what made our Synod successful was the broad-based, committed participation of our people. And it is that kind of participation that will ensure the success of our follow-up.

We'll all participate that in our own



## A LONG THE WAY

ways, of course. We all have different gifts, responsibilities and opportunities. But there are some ways in which we can be powerfully joined in that endeavor. One of them is our Advent prayer. As we remember and celebrate God's wonderful ways with us during this holy season, I hope that we will be in touch as well with the yearnings of our hearts, with the needs of our brothers and sisters in the human community.

If, for example, our first Synod priority is lifelong Christian education for all, what does that mean to me in the concrete circumstances of my daily life? What is it that I most want to learn,

celebrate or do in order to come to fuller life in the Lord? What do I need to do myself to move in that desired direction? And, if I can't do it alone, to whom can I turn for help?

To that set of questions I would add one more. As a member of the Catholic community, how can I enrich my sisters and brothers by sharing the resources I have? I am referring to such things as education, life experience, time, money, interest, skills and talents and the like.

Advent is a good time to remember that the Lord is constantly and lovingly calling us to new life. That is a call to go beyond where we are now, to deepen our sense our life, to broaden our horizons.

That kind of growth happens, I believe, when we are attentive to the meaning of our daily experience, and when we are willing to share the fruits of our reflection with others.

Learning and teaching, listening and speaking, giving and receiving are all important components of human growth, and very much a part of our Advent call.

I wish you a rich and blessed Advent season. I hope that we will learn much through our conversations with the Lord and with one another.

Peace to all.



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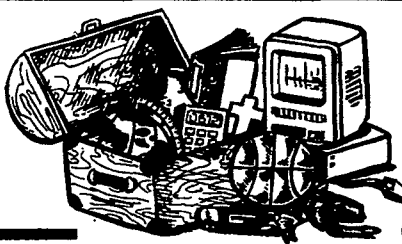
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<i>ADVENT CAROL SERVICE</i>	<b>12/10, 8:30 p.m.</b>
<i>CAROLS FOR CHRISTMAS</i>	<b>12/12, 7 p.m.</b>
<i>WITH HEART AND VOICE CHRISTMAS SPECIAL</i>	<b>12/19, 7 p.m.</b>
<i>CLEVELAND ORCHESTRA CHRISTMAS CONCERT</i>	<b>12/21, 9 p.m.</b>
<i>A BILINGUAL NUTCRACKER</i>	<b>12/22, 8 p.m.</b>
<i>CHRISTMAS WITH THE PHILADELPHIA SINGERS</i>	<b>12/23, Noon</b>
<i>A FESTIVAL OF NINE LESSONS AND CAROLS</i>	<b>12/24, 10 a.m.</b>
<i>CHRISTMAS EVE WITH MORDECAI LIPSHUTZ</i>	<b>12/24, 8 p.m.</b>
<i>ECHOES OF CHRISTMAS</i>	<b>12/25, 8 p.m.</b>