

December 1994



y dear people

As Bishop of the Church of Rochester, it is my privilege to issue this Diocesan Pastoral Plan resulting from our diocesan Synod. In March of 1991, I asked every member in our diocese to help initiate the Synod process by responding to a questionnaire. How pleased I am now to communicate this Plan resulting from nearly four years of continuous dialogue. During that time, our entire local church has been walking together through parish, regional and diocesan gatherings to discern the future of our diocesan life. Throughout this journey, we have benefited from rich streams of faith, diversity, imagination and talent with which our gracious God has endowed us. The hallmark of our Synod process has been open, honest dialogue guided by the Holy Spirit. This continuous prayerful dialogue has given us a deeper appreciation of our shared responsibility for the life and mission of our local church. As a result of our Synod process, we have chosen specific Goals with related Objectives, which all of us -- parishes, faith communities and the Pastoral Center -- are mutually accountable for implementing. To help parishes fulfill this vision and to assure that the work and spirit of the Synod continue, this Diocesan Pastoral Plan outlines Action Steps that the diocesan Pastoral Center will offer during 1995-96. These Action Steps have a short term focus and will be updated each year in response to parish needs. The fruits of the Synod will be realized only if parish communities, faith communities and the Pastoral Center together commit ourselves consistently and concretely to implementation of the Pastoral Plan Goals and Objectives. To this end, let me share with you my expectations as we begin to implement this

Pastoral Plan: ♦ The heart of Synod implementation is at the parish level. Thus each parish will develop and share an implementation plan which is based on our Diocesan Goals and Objectives, and which contains annual measurable Action Steps. Every parish need not develop Action Steps on every Goal or Objective each year, but over the five year period some progress should be made on all four Goals. ♦ Broad based lay participation is central to this implementation process. ♦ Parish implementation plans are to reflect opportunities for networking / resource sharing with other parishes, institutions and/or the Pastoral Center. ♦ The focus of our diocesan Pastoral Center staff responsibilities will change to become a resource to support parish implementation of the Goals and Objectives. ♦ Consultative groups and support structures within the diocese will be reviewed and reconstituted as necessary to support implementing this Pastoral Plan. Immediate emphasis will be on Regional Coordinators, Regional Synod Coordinators, the Diocesan Pastoral Council and the Women's Commission. ♦ We will enhance the quality and focus of our communications to support the implementation of this Pastoral Plan. These expectations call us to new ways of being church, new ways of being parish. I encourage you to read the Pastoral Plan and actively participate in your parish's implementation. I gratefully acknowledge the input from the Synod Implementation Commission, the Pastoral Center staff, our key advisory groups and all our parishes / faith communities. I announce this Pastoral Plan with confidence that our Synod journey will continue to be exciting and productive as we walk together in faith, hope and love toward the year 2000.

With every good wish, I remain

Your brother in Christ,
Matthew H. Clark
† Matthew H. Clark
Bishop of Rochester