

Niece's friendship adds sparkle to season

I need to thank my exciting niece Kathleen for sharing with me and the family an experience that has done much to spur and shape my Advent prayer. That experience is a growing relationship she has developed with Garon, a young man who serves in Kuwait with the United States Army.

Some months ago, Kathleen and Garon made contact with one another on the Internet. Since that time they have been in steady communication. And that has given rise to an exchange of photographs, inter-continental telephone calls and even the production by Kathleen of a video through which she introduced her mother, dad and sisters to Garon.

It has been a joy to watch the progression of this relationship, even from my limited perspective, and to hear Kathleen speak about it. There is something exciting about it all. I think it is because these two young people have come to know one another and develop a mutual fondness relying almost exclusively on the power of the word, spoken and written.

I am not privy to their conversations, of course. But I have a strong sense that — without ever having laid eyes on one another — they have come to a friendship that is quite strong because it is based on conversations about experiences, values, common interests, hopes and dreams that are important to them.

along
the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

And, based on long experience with Kathleen, I am quite sure that they have shared much laughter. All of that makes me wonder if they would know one another as well as they do now if they had met in the standard way and had known one another for a similar period of time. I do not know; I just wonder about it.

In any case, things really get exciting at this stage of things. Garon is now in Texas at his home military base. He will go to Louisiana to spend Christmas with his family. And then ... guess what! You've got it. On December 27 Garon will come to Waterford, where he and Kathleen will meet face to face for the first time.

I'm excited about his arrival and can only imagine Kathleen's state of mind. Won't it be wonderful when they can see one another's faces when they laugh? Or when they're just quiet with one another in a way that could never occur in correspondence

or on the telephone? Or when they take a walk or have a meal together? And won't it be fun when Garon meets people who love Kathleen and have enjoyed her delightful friendship for years? And how will he react when we tell him what Kathleen is really like?

The experience I have mentioned above and all the questions it raises have been very helpful to me in Advent prayer. They have spoken to me about joyful hope in a fresh way. They have led me to pray and think a lot about how the Feast of Christmas puts a human face on God's love for all of us.

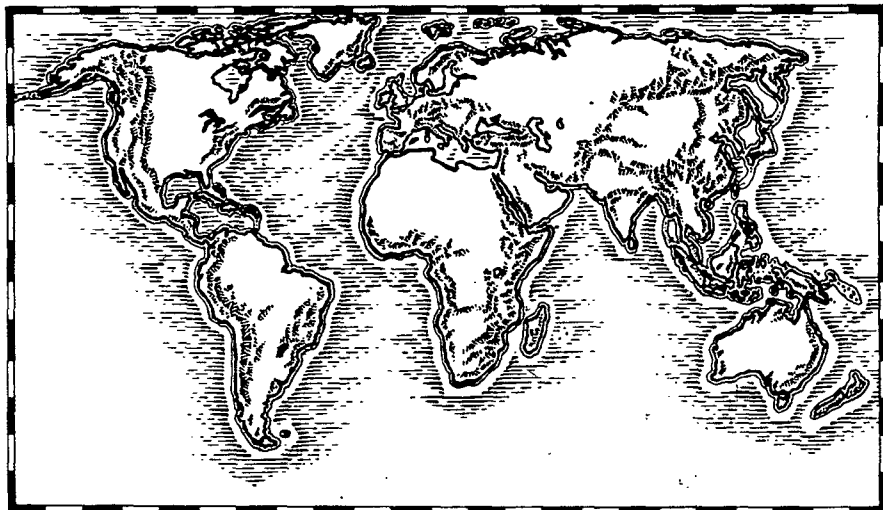
For so much of this I am grateful to Kathleen and Garon. I hope and pray that their moment of meeting next week will be very special for both them, as I am sure it will be for all of us who love Kathleen.

It will be for them the summation of what has gone before. It will also be a new beginning. Who knows what the future holds for them? I only hope that their moment of meeting face to face will be a happy one and that, whatever the future may be, that first meeting will always be a happy memory for each of them.

To you dear friends and to all of your loved ones, I extend affectionate best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with blessings.

Peace to all.

*"Christmas began
in the heart of God.
It is only complete when
it reaches the heart of all people."*
—Author unknown



*May Your Heart be Touched
by the Miracle of Christmas!*

In the name of the missionaries and the people of God they serve in every area of Latin America, Africa, the South Pacific and Asia... We thank you for helping us touch the world with God's unselfish love during the past year.

We pray that Christ will be the real light, joy and peace of your life throughout the New Year!

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The Monthly Prayer Request For Priests

Will you pray for a priest each day?

JESUS' PRAYER FOR HIS PRIESTS

O Jesus, by Thy most loving Heart, I implore Thee to inflame with zeal for Thy love and glory all the priests of the world, all missionaries and those whose office it is to preach Thy word, that on fire with holy zeal, they may snatch souls from the devil and lead them into the shelter of Thy Heart, where for ever they may glorify Thee.

Imprimatur: E. Morrogh Bernard, Vic. Gen. Westmonasterii, May 5, 1953

Prayer Suggestions: Mass, Rosary, Fasting, Day Offering, Eucharistic Adoration, Offering, Offerings, Divine Mercy Chaplet

January, 1997

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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