

Take time to reflect on God's incarnate love

Please accept my very best wishes for a blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with good things for you and your loved ones.

I hope that the swift pace and the swirl of events so common at this time of year will allow you at least some time to contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation.

I encourage you to do that because I believe it is in knowing Christ that we come to know our God and to have a deeper sense of the dignity of all human beings.

How we go about such contemplation will vary according to our personalities, experience, responsibilities and the circumstances of our lives.

One might come in touch with the meaning of the feast while reading the Christmas story to a child.

Another might brush the mystery of Christ while offering a kindness or receiving one.

Still another might turn to prayer when the line moves slowly in supermarket or department store.

The ill or the homeless or the unemployed and those who walk with them might find encouragement in the utter poverty of the Christ child, and the vul-

along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

nerability and insecurity that accompany poverty.

However you may choose to open your heart to the great Feast of Christmas, I hope you will be unafraid to trust the Lord with whatever you identify in yourself as frail, vulnerable or unredeemed.

Central to the great beauty of the Christmas Feast is its message that Jesus understands the human condition because he has been through it all. I should rather say that he knows your heart and mine beyond our understanding, and loves us deeply no matter what we may think of ourselves. Christ's love for us is that real, that human, that personal, that enduring.

Christmas reminds us in healthy ways that our God, while a God of great power and majesty, chooses to be near us in intimate relationship. God comes

to us in the daily and the ordinary, even in the disorganized and unwelcome aspects of life.

That is a great consolation to me. I hope it is to you. Christmas says that we do not need to retreat from the daily, concrete challenges of life to find God. This great feast says rather that God is in all of it, sustaining us and calling us to new life.

My Christmas schedule will be the same as it has been since I began my ministry as bishop. I will be celebrating with the community at Sacred Heart Cathedral at midnight, and with the prisoners at the Monroe County Jail on Christmas morning.

Following the liturgy at the jail I will be going to the home of my sister and brother-in-law for dinner. An added bonus this year will be the companionship of my niece, Grace, who will come by train to visit on December 23 and drive back to Waterford with me on Christmas day. Margaret did the same thing last year. As you know, I delight in their friendship and all of the excitement they bring to life.

Once again I wish you great joy at Christmas.

Peace to all.

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THE MONTHLY PRAYER REQUEST FOR PRIESTS

Would you pray for a priest each day?

A Prayer For Priests

Keep them, I pray Thee, dearest Lord,
Keep them, for they are Thine—
Thy priest whose lives burn out before
Thy consecrated shrine.
Keep them, for they are in the world,
Though from the world apart;
When earthly pleasures tempt, allure,
— Shelter them in Thy heart.
Keep them, and comfort them in hours
Of loneliness and pain,
When all their life of sacrifice

For souls seems but in vain.
Keep them, and O remember, Lord,
They have no one but Thee,
Yet they have only human hearts,
With human frailty.
Keep them as spotless as the Host,
That daily they caress;
Their every thought and word and deed,
Deign, dearest Lord, to bless.

Imprimatur: †D. Card. Dougherty, Arch. of Philadelphia

January, 1998

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Please send donations to: MPRP 70-A Green Knolls Dr., Rochester, NY 14620-4746				1 Phillip J. Billotte	2 Bernard Carges	3 Bishop Matthew Clark
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JANUARY BINGO CALENDAR

SPECIAL PAID ADVERTISEMENT • CALL FOR HOLIDAY CANCELLATIONS

BINGO

SUNDAY

7:30 p.m. ... Holy Family Church ... 899 Jay St., Rochester ... 716-328-3110

7:30 p.m. ... St. Boniface Church ... 15 Whalin St., Rochester ... 716-271-1468

7:30 p.m. ... St. Rita School ... 1008 Maple Dr., Webster ... 716-671-1100

MONDAY

7:30 p.m. ... St. Jude's Church ... 4100 Lyell Rd., Rochester ... 716-241-4322

TUESDAY

7:30 p.m. ... St. Helens Church ... Gates Center Bingo, Westmar Plaza ... 716-235-1210

WEDNESDAY

7:30 p.m. ... Holy Family Home School Assoc. ... 899 Jay St., Rochester ... 716-328-4800

7:30 p.m. ... Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church/St. Andrew School ... 923 Portland, Rochester ... 716-226-8458

FRIDAY

8:00 p.m. ... St. Mark Church ... 54 Kuhn Rd., Rochester ... 716-225-3710

SATURDAY

7:30 p.m. ... Good Shepherd Church ... 3285 E. Henrietta Rd., Rochester ... 716-334-3518

8:00 p.m. ... St. Thomas the Apostle Church ... 41 Colchester Dr., Rochester ... 716-226-2943

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