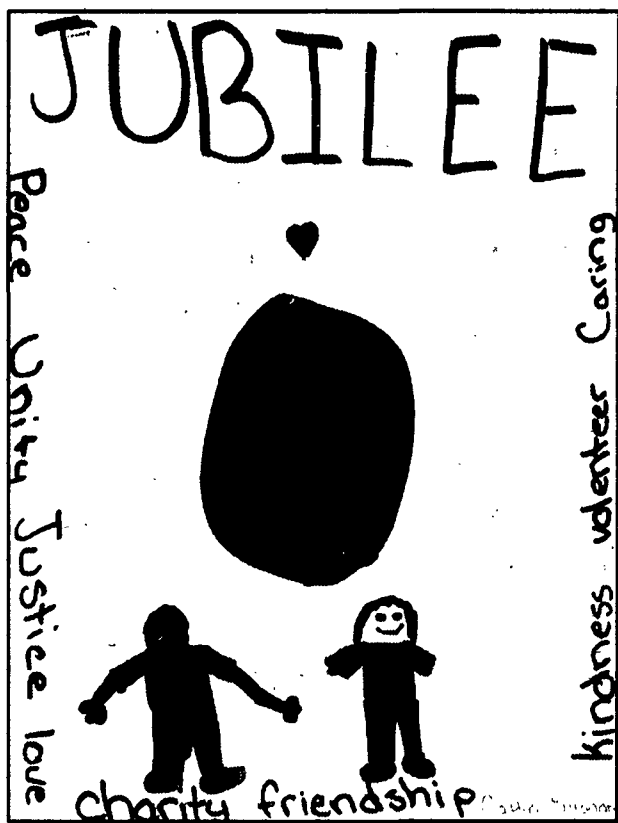


Open wide the doors to Christ



Caitlin Strandberg

Continued from previous page

Every morning, God gives us the gift of a new day with all the opportunities and wonder a new beginning holds. In the coming jubilee year, I would like for all of us to recognize the presence of God in our lives and see the endless possibilities the new millennium holds.

I think that people don't recognize that every single day, their life is filled with more blessings than curses. We have a complaint department, but we don't have a "nice things" department.

Every day is an opportunity for people to ask God what he wants and needs them to do, and for them to ask themselves what they want to do. We have a chance to renew our commitment to God, to church and to each other. What a gift. What an opportunity. What a challenge.

- Ellen Halahan, parent, catechist, co-coordinator of religious education at St. Paul of the Cross Church, Honeoye Falls.

I hope for positive attitudes, and no negativity. I know technology has to get better as years go by, but it is good as it is.

I want to be a better husband and a better father. I want to keep loving my wife, and, as far as my children,

I want to keep teaching them and fathering them and loving them. To keep doing the same thing, but more.

- Robert Vazquez Jr., maintenance mechanic at the Diocese of Rochester's Pastoral Office, Gates, and parishioner at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church, Rochester.

My hope for the new millennium is for the youth of America to stop and think how good they have it, and stop all the violence against people that are trying to help them - parents, schoolteachers - also, each other.

As for myself, my hopes are for a healthier and spiritual new year.

- Michael Rosario, maintenance, diocesan Pastoral Office, Gates, and parishioner at St. Michael's Church, Rochester.

As described in the 25th chapter of Leviticus, God designated the jubilee year to be a time of freedom and forgiveness. This perspective offers both a challenge and hope. I must evaluate and discover in my life what things or people have me in bondage. The flip side of that is to recognize where I have put other people in bondage because of my attitude or unwillingness to forgive. The hope comes in the forgiveness that Jesus provided for us on the cross, if only I accept that gift. My desire for the Jubilee Year is for a much greater love and respect for life. It is difficult to hate or abuse someone or something we cherish; but when I do I should recall Jesus' words (paraphrased): "forgive me my sins as I forgive those who sin against me" and then act on them to bring freedom to all involved.

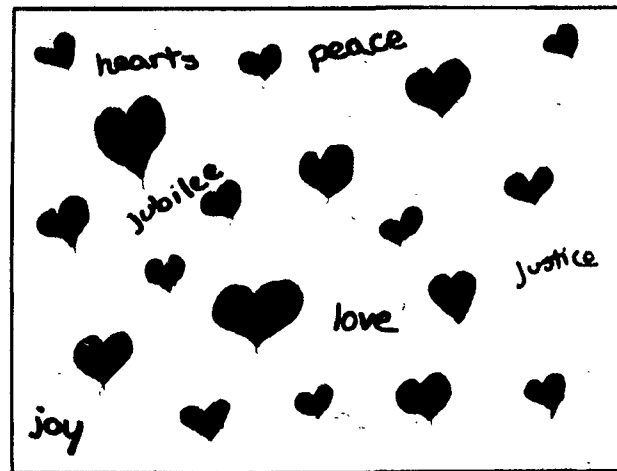
- Jan Harmon, parish assistant, Church of the Resurrection, Fairport

As far as the world goes, or the nation, I'm just really for world harmony and fighting the disease of poverty. For the church, something that I really hope for is that the pope will evaluate whether women can become priests, and married priests as well. On a personal level, for myself and my family, (I hope) that we can continue to serve the Lord in any way he calls us.

- Terri Milam, parish secretary, St. Michael's Church, Penn Yan

As we begin the third millennium since the birth of Christ, I can't help but think how little the world has really changed. Oh, sure, we have the Internet and electricity, automobiles and space shuttles, penicillin and organ transplants, but we also have homelessness, murder, greed, hunger and countless other problems which haven't changed for 2,000 years. The outer shell has changed greatly while the inner shell has not.

But I have great hope. As Paul has said, "We know that all things work together for good." Romans 8:28. My parents spent their early years as slave labor for the Nazis, and yet here I am, a deacon of the church living in the relative comfort of the United States. I have surely felt God's touch in my life, and so I have hope that in



Merritt Ward

this new millennium that we will see a true change of heart among us all.

- Deacon George Kozak, Immaculate Conception Church, Ithaca

In the real world, my expectations are more of the same old sinful stuff. It is best expressed by Archbishop Daniel E. Pilarczyk of Cincinnati who wrote: "Disarray in God's creation is not limited to individuals. In social systems, whole groups of people are despised and deprived of their rights because of their race; in economic systems, people live and die in misery; in political systems, service to others is replaced by the domination of the weak by those who are more powerful."

I would dare believe that in this Year of Jubilee, God's graces will move people to diminish that "disarray." However, in the Jubilee, I would expect that the church would respond at great sacrifice to itself with forgiveness of debts to the poor, and reconciliation with itself by a common effort to accept the meaning of the words, "Christ is like us in all things but sin." Then the lion and the lamb, the (National Catholic Reporter) and The Wanderer, then the hierarchy and the laity would dance together in Jubilee blessings.

Locally, my greatest hope is the Church of Rochester will celebrate the Jubilee Year with heroic sacrificial efforts to aid the "local victims" of the disarray in our world.

- Father Donald E. McCarthy, CSB, parochial vicar, St. Rita's Church, Webster

My big thing for the future is to get more of our young adults (teenagers) involved in ministry in the church (planning Masses, staffing retreats). You get a better reaction from these young people if you don't call them "kids" or "youngsters" or "teenagers." If you treat them like young adults they act like adults.

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