

## New Year fireworks over; inner work begins

Tell the truth, now: How does it really feel to you and what are your reactions to our entry into the year 2000?

I did enjoy keeping an eye on television's coverage of the new year as it dawned progressively around this planet of ours. My favorite single moment was the fireworks display at the Eiffel Tower! And, like people everywhere, I was pleased and relieved that we were spared terrorist activity and any significant breakdown of important computer systems. It seems that all of the precautions taken, expensive though they were, were worth it.

But as I look out my window this morning, things look very much the same as they did pre-year 2000. I think the Dalai Lama put it well earlier when he reminded us that when the new millennium broke the same stars would be in the sky as had always been there. His intent, as I took it, was to say that, if we are to change for the better, that change will find its roots in inner conversion, not in some magical or mystical outside event.

The Dalai Lama reminds us of something we all know because we learn it from events as specific as the New Year's resolutions we made last week and as general as the patterns of our own human experience: Change of significance is certainly possible,

### along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

but it is generally slow. Progress is always a part of our potential, but rarely if ever does it occur without interruptions or occasional setbacks.

Because it offers such hope to us who seek deeper, freer life and yet who know the drag of sin and selfishness, I embrace with enthusiasm the possibilities offered by this year of Jubilee. There is nothing magic or automatic about it. Rather it encourages us to open our hearts anew to the light of Christ. And it urges us to live so that with the grace of God we put into right order our relationship with God and our relationships with our sisters and brothers.

Through the year 2000, you will hear quite a bit about the themes of Jubilee Year 2000 in your parish community. There will be many opportunities for prayer and other activities by which we can express in concrete ways both our need and our

desire to grow in our love for God and for neighbor. I hope that you will be alert to these opportunities and that you will respond to them in your usual generous fashion.

In anticipation of those Jubilee Year activities, it might be helpful to take to your prayer and conversations some questions like the following:

1. In our diocese and parish communities, how can I more strongly and consistently live out the Gospel mandate to care for those most in need?

2. As I consider the network of my own relationships, where do I detect strengths upon which I can build? Where do I perceive the need for strengthening or even healing?

3. What are the values, convictions and beliefs that hold the deepest place in my heart? Do they consistently inform and direct my actions? Or do other lesser values seem to take over from time to time?

Whatever the questions or themes you take to your own heart, I hope you will do so in peace and with great confidence. We celebrate the Jubilee remembering God's gracious mercy. If we rely on that gift, we know that good things will happen in our lives.

Peace to all.



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—Marguerite "Peg" Pinney"

Irondequoit, New York

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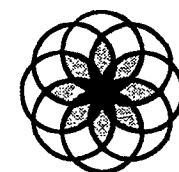
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