

## Wishing you a season of grace and peace

As we come to the Christmas feast and anticipate the beginning of a new year, I want to offer you affectionate greetings and the promise of my prayers. I hope that this special season will be one of grace and peace for you and all of your loved ones.

I thank you for all that you have done in this Jubilee Year 2000, to open your heart to the grace of Christ, for the generous ways in which you have responded to the grace. In my travels through the diocese for our 11 regional jubilee prayer services, I heard wonderful stories of God's healing presence. You might be amazed to know that the common experience of such presence comes not so much in mystical favors or in flashy events as in the kindness of sisters and brothers.

One woman spoke of the care of her parish community who helped her discover her dignity and worth beyond her addictions. A gentleman my age gave thanks for the witness of his grandson whose faithful preparation for the sacra-

along  
the way

BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



ments inspired his grandfather to return to them after many years. A teen from a home situation in which faith was discouraged found a way both to honor her parents and practice the faith she loves. I offer these as examples of stories like them that I heard in great number. No doubt, many other small miracles took place among us during this jubilee year.

More public in profile was your generous response to our jubilee forgiveness fund. The quiet, thoughtful generosity was characteristic of parish communities. The same was true of the spirit of individual donors. All recognized

that we need one another, and that at times the need is for financial assistance. I shall remember for a long time that you gave money to help others. But I'll never forget the humble spirit with which you did it.

I give you my thanks for preparing me all through the year for this Christmas feast. When I see your faces, when I remember how you care for one another, I thirst to know better the Christ who inspires you. You help me to experience the love of God made flesh and teach me how to respond in similar fashion.

On Christmas I shall celebrate the Eucharistic Liturgy with the people of Sacred Heart Cathedral and with inmates at the Monroe County Jail. You and your loved ones will be in my prayer at both celebrations. I hope that all of us will know Christ the more deeply that day, and come to greater stature before God and one another.

Merry Christmas  
Peace to all.

## Merry Christmas



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-Fred and Margaret Spangler

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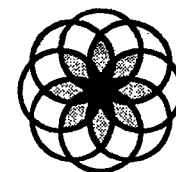
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