

## Advent offers spiritual blessings

We begin Advent on Sunday. I always enjoy the weeks of that season, and this year I look forward to it with special anticipation. That added measure of anticipation is because of the events of September 11.

The horror of that day and its aftermath still works in me, as I know it does in most of you. Families grieve the loss of loved ones. Survivors cope with a trauma that is deep. Rescue workers deal with memories — some with continuing daily experience — that bring pain to the spirit. And all of us, in one way or another, know the lingering pain of these events.

The invitation of Advent is to remember, to re-vision the promise of Christ. That promise is that the fullness for which God created us will be realized when he comes again in glory. The imagery of the Scripture readings in the weeks ahead calls us to an awareness of that fullness, to a vision of heavenly life.

In other words, the Scriptures remind us of what things are meant to be so that we, co-creators with the Lord, can help make them so. The intent is not to avoid the sometimes-painful reality of human existence, but to provide a framework or context within which we can make good decisions and engage in productive rather than destructive activity.

That kind of framework or vision allows us to be wise and constructive in our

### along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

response to tragedy. Against it we can measure the force of emotion, which might impel us to a spirit of vengeance rather than to justice. It can help us to deal effectively not only with the criminals responsible for such atrocities, but with economic and social conditions that can provide a breeding ground for terrorism.

I know that these issues do not lend themselves to easy solutions. They are complex and deeply challenging. But I do believe that the human family can keep before it some of the great truths we will be praying about and trying to live out during this Advent season. I think of the fact that we all belong to one human family. We are all made in the image and likeness of God. We cannot hope for peace unless we work for justice.

How do we go about the business of making the invitation of Advent our own? And, especially, how do we do so given the swirl of activity that characterizes this time of year in our culture? Not easy ques-

tions, are they? But I hope we can all find ways to deal with them as we go about our December rounds.

I offer a few suggestions for your consideration in the weeks ahead:

1. Be in touch, if you can, with folks whose options are few for want of money or friends or opportunity. Explore possibilities of being of support to them, not only with money and during the holiday season alone, but with friendship and concern through the year.

2. Set aside a time for prayer each day with the intention of being in touch with your own freedom and how you use it to deepen the relationships and advance the causes that really matter to you. Perhaps you could invite your family or other loved ones to share such moments with you.

3. Try to be as observant and perceptive as you can be about life in our region. By the way we live together, do we give evidence that we believe we are all a part of one human family? That each of us has an inviolable human dignity? That there is an essential relationship between justice and peace?

I hope that you and your loved ones will have a blessed Advent season. I include in that the hope that you will be blessed with a renewed sense of purpose in life, so that everything in your daily life will have fresh and exciting meaning for you.

Peace to all.



*"Chapel Oaks is perfect for us! We've made so many wonderful friends and the staff here are so attentive. Going to the dining room is like being in a fine restaurant and the meals are delicious. We're able to travel and maintain our busy lifestyle without having to worry anymore about property upkeep and day to day maintenance. We know if we go away, everything is taken care of. Now that's what retirement should be."*

-Fred and Margaret Spangler

**No Entrance Fee Required. Call us today!**

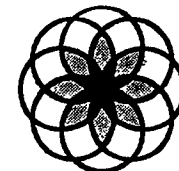
## "We've made so many wonderful friends."

The French call it *joie de vivre*, or love of life. That ability to approach life joyfully and fully appreciate all that each day has to offer. Every day, residents of Chapel Oaks, Rochester's newest and finest rental retirement community, are finding the joy of retirement living. Once you've experienced life at Chapel Oaks, you may find yourself falling in love with the true joy of living all over again.

Fall in love with the *tradition* of St. Ann's of Greater Rochester, Inc., who for 125 years has provided senior adults with a truly fulfilling retirement lifestyle. The *location* of being perfectly situated on 14 beautiful, secluded acres of the St. Ann's campus and just minutes away from Rochester's finest shopping, entertainment and cultural activities. The *independence* to continue an active life style without routine maintenance and tiresome daily chores. The *value* of a rental concept with no entrance fee, which makes Chapel Oaks Rochester's most affordable retirement living options. The *convenience* of exceptional services and amenities, and the

spacious one- and two-bedroom apartment homes. Or, fall in love with the *security and peace of mind* that comes from having priority access to a full continuum of health care services right on the St. Ann's campus.

Retirement is your time to seize the day and life to its fullest; to experience your "joie de vivre." Please call (716) 342-3052 for more information about Chapel Oaks or to arrange your personal tour. Once you see all that we have to offer, you may just find yourself falling in love with the true joy of living all over again!



**ST. ANN'S**  
CHAPEL OAKS  
Full of Life

1550 Portland Avenue Rochester, NY 14621  
(716) 342-3052

An affiliate of St. Ann's of Greater Rochester, Inc.



Equal Housing Opportunity