

True Advent spirit displayed at MCH

I have tried to carry the attentiveness and alertness to God's presence and activity in our lives to which I referred last week into these early Advent days.

When I went to Monroe Community Hospital on Sunday for Advent liturgy, I prayed on my way there for the grace of that awareness of God's presence in that extraordinary community.

God was very good to me. The experience of the community gathered there renewed my hope and helped me to center my attention on what really matters in my life.

All of that happened in a variety of ways, no one of which could fairly be labeled extraordinary.

I refer to the peaceful spirit which shines from patients — unable to live at home — who struggle with chronic, sometimes, painful problems. I think of the care offered to them by competent and devoted medical and professional staffs, and by the volunteers who translate their faith into the sacri-



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Along the Way

ficial service of others. And, of course, I am mindful as I write of the pastoral care offered to the community by Father Dennis Bon-signore, Chaplain Sue Shady, Deacons Chuck Dispenza and Tom Cleary.

It was a special joy to be there on a day when members of the youth group of St. Joseph's Parish in Rush were there to serve the residents. The kids transported residents to and from the worship area. Without that kind of assistance

such celebrations are just not possible. But the kids — and all of the volunteers — do much more than provide important services. They give the gifts of their interest, good humor and care. In short, they offer their friendship, and nothing is more important to the residents than that.

It has been my experience over the years that those who serve the residents of Monroe Community Hospital in the manner described above always speak of receiving more than they give from the residents. You will not meet a more grateful group than the residents. The manner in which they express their thanks, and the frequency with which they do it, is always moving to those who spend time with them.

I am always humbled by the generosity of this community which gathers under the patronage of St. Camillus. For several years they have presented me with a generous check in support of our Thanks Giv-

ing Appeal. This year they were mindful that we included our Thanks Giving Appeal in our Partners in Faith Campaign and gave me a gift — more generous than ever — in support of Partners in Faith.

Let me add that these diocesan concerns are among the general benefactors of the St. Camillus community.

I thank them all for the Advent gift they gave to me — most especially when I find myself so absorbed in my own concerns that I become benumbed to the much more significant concerns of others.

Accept my renewed good wishes to you and your loved ones for this holy season. I hope that you are taking the opportunity occasionally to step back from every day demands to look at the larger picture of your life and how you would like to respond to the gifts and talents God has lavished upon you.

Peace to all.

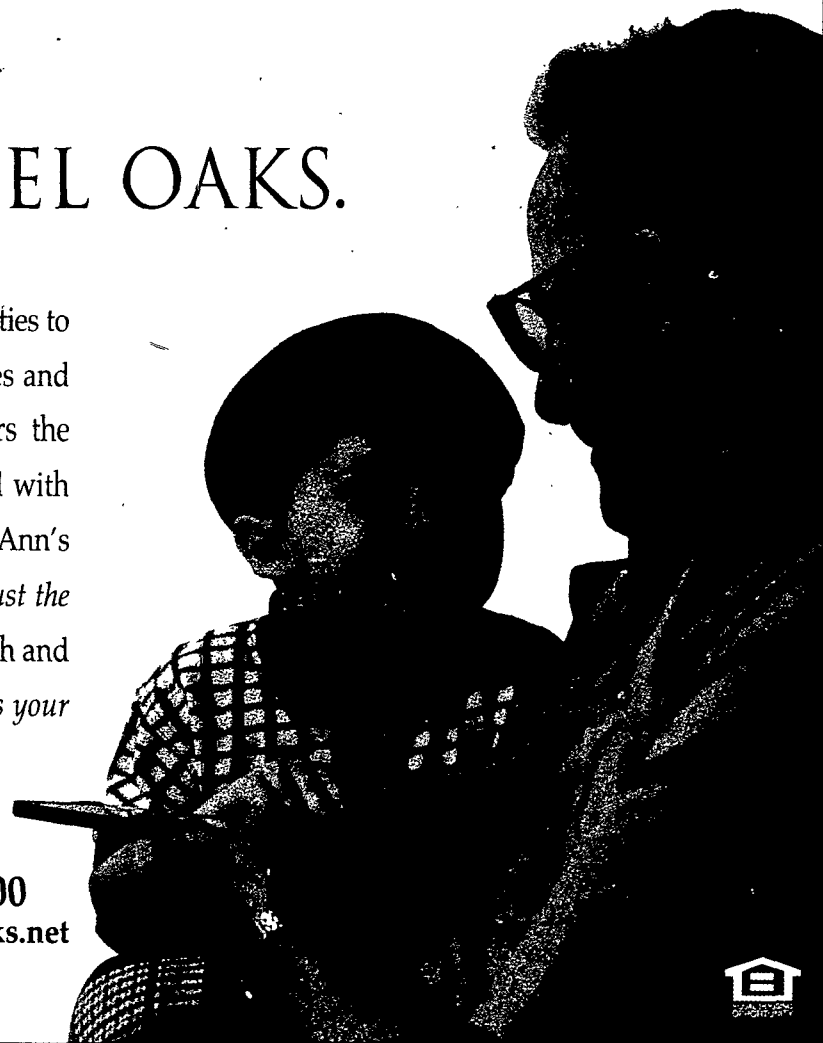
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