

# Appealing to a 'love that never ends'

The prologue of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* contains a simple, but quite profound statement about our beliefs, teachings and our mission as church and individual Catholics:

"The whole concern of doctrine and its teaching must be directed to the love that never ends," it reads. "Whether something is proposed for belief, for hope or for action, the love of our Lord must always be made accessible, so that anyone can see that all the works of perfect Christian virtue spring from love and have no other objective than to arrive at love."

I am particularly struck by the lovely thought of our faith and its teachings as a "love that never ends." I am inspired by the idea that we must stand for, work for and devote our Christian energy "to arrive at love," the love embodied in Jesus Christ and the love we must have for each other as sisters and brothers in Christ.

That "love that never ends" — and the connection we share as children of God — is the idea behind the annual Thanks Giving Appeal, as well. You have likely received information about the campaign or will shortly by the time you read this. Please pray about the reasons for the appeal, why we ask your help and why it is important that we



**Bishop Matthew H. Clark**

## Along the Way

are successful.

Quite simply, as Catholics, we do it out of love.

Certainly our faith teaches us that love and charity are synonymous; indeed, the word "charity" is from the Latin *caritas*, or Christian love for one's fellow beings. In Scripture, the words are often used interchangeably, so closely are they linked by etymology, meaning and intent. For example, many of you are quite familiar with the oft-quoted writing of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians: "If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing..." In the earliest English translations of Scriptures, such as the King James Version, the word "charity" is used in the verse instead of the word

"love."

And so, for a Christian, for the children of a generous God, love and charity — helping each other and caring for one another — are inextricable.

In that spirit, we ask for your financial gifts in this year's Thanks Giving Appeal — the theme of which is Sharing Our Blessings ... and Changing Lives Forever — with this end in mind: to further the church's mission, to bring the light and love of Christ to as many people as we can possibly reach, to produce programs and ministries aimed at continuing and extending this "love that never ends."

We use your gifts to develop and carry out many ministries. We strive to make the healing and helping hands of Christ Jesus accessible and a cause for hope and joy — to our poor struggling to stay afloat, our elderly coping with the challenges of aging, our youth and families learning more about our faith, and in many other ways.

Perhaps you are touched by the outreach to our many migrant families, who find safety, support and encouragement as we take the love of Jesus right to the fields where they fervently toil to make ends meet.

Perhaps your own spirit or the spirit of someone you love has been by set ablaze with knowledge and inspiration through the intervention of a devoted Catholic-school teacher or religious-education instructor.

Maybe you or someone you know has benefited from the wonderful healing ministries of Catholic Char-

ities.

Or maybe you have enjoyed the dynamic experience of getting to know better people of other faiths as we work toward community harmony through our ecumenical programs.

Perhaps your teenager has found an anchor and guiding light in God as a result of our diocesan-wide youth-ministry programs.

These are among the many, many ministries that extend the church and the life-changing love of the Risen Christ into hearts young and old and all those in between.

I know I can count on you to help us with the continued need we have in our community, so challenged economically in the past few years. You showed this spirit of giving and fellowship in the amazing Partners In Faith capital campaign, which addressed the long-term needs of specific areas, such as Catholic Schools, our priest retirement fund, the renovation of our lovely cathedral, Catholic Charities and the new St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry.

In fact, your generosity never fails to amaze and humble me.

I pray that in this Thanks Giving Appeal you will count your own blessings and ask God to help you share as much as you can with others. I pray that lives will truly be changed forever, and that together we will perpetuate and extend the magnificent power of the Risen Christ into the lives of others so that they, too, can feel what all of us feel in this "love that never ends."

Peace to all.

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