



## DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER

1150 Buffalo Road · Rochester, NY 14624-1890

(585) 328-3210 · FAX (585) 328-3149

*Bishop's Office*

November 28, 2007

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ:

I write to you today to announce a major initiative for our Diocese—an initiative that I hope will change our lives. Beginning in Lent 2008, I am inviting you to enter with me into a time of renewal.

These past few years have been hard on everyone. A changing economy and shifting demographics have altered our parishes dramatically. The resulting pastoral planning has been truly painful as we consolidated, merged and closed churches. The abuse scandal has offended and discouraged many of the faithful. Mass attendance is down. Vocations to the priesthood and religious life are few. Some find us helplessly polarized between those who are impatient for further change and those who fear the complete erosion of our treasured past. Some say we have lost our focus. Commentators have called us “a people adrift.”

So now is the perfect time for renewal.

Sisters and brothers, I invite you to enter with me into a deeper relationship with Jesus, our Lord and Savior. Our faith has never really been about buildings and boundaries. So I invite you to enter a multi-year commitment to nourish what is most important—a personal relationship with Jesus, through prayer and Scripture.

A team of priests and pastoral ministers is designing tools and program options that will be made available to us through our parishes over the next several years to assist us in this process. While the details will be announced as we go along, I invite you at this point to be a willing participant, opening your heart to become more truly his disciple.

During these Advent days of longing and expectation, I call our local Church to deep prayer for the success of this “time of renewal,” which will begin during this coming season of Lent.

With every good wish, I remain

Your brother in Christ,

+Matthew H. Clark  
Bishop of Rochester

*God's Love Endures Forever*