

Photos help us relive memories

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Most people love photographs. At least it seems so to me, especially at this time of the year. That may be because I've celebrated so many confirmations in recent weeks and have participated in a variety of celebrations that have meant a great deal to people.

At Bishop Hogan's golden jubilee celebrations, for example, several photographers — both professional and amateur — recorded the events of the days for future enjoyment.

And at the jubilee dinner following the liturgy at Sacred Heart Cathedral, we enjoyed a music-photo presentation that helped us all to remember some of the most significant moments in the bishop's life.

A second example that comes to mind happened following a confirmation last Friday at St. Joseph's in Rush. Among those who asked for a picture after the ceremony was a beautiful young woman of 14.

After the picture had been taken, the young woman's mother came to me and said that she was especially pleased to have it. I asked her why, and she replied that when her daughter was an infant her family and I had been together at a large party. The mother had taken a picture of me holding her then-tiny daughter in my lap. Now she wanted a second photo to bridge the years.

The mother added a rider to the story. She reminded me that on the occasion of the picture taken years ago, I had given the cherry



A LONG THE WAY

from my manhattan to the daughter I confirmed Friday night at Rush. I breathed just a bit more easily when the mother reassured me I had done so only with her permission.

It seemed to me that on both occasions there was a strong sense that pictures are important to people because they help us relive significant events, because they can touch deep feelings, because they speak to the heart in ways that words cannot.

I have often thought that had George Eastman been born before our Lord, Jesus would have carried some pictures with him as complements to the wonderful word-pictures and stories he used when he wanted to speak to the hearts of those who wal-

ked with him.

Every now and then I take a moment, in my room or my office, to look carefully at the photos I have hanging in those places. And occasionally at home, I take out a photo album and rest with the memories and feelings that emerge and I move slowly through its pages.

I find it a rewarding way to be in touch with my own history, to meditate on the fidelity and compassion of God, to remember and give thanks for the people and the events through which my life has taken its shape.

But such moments touch not only the past. I never spend time with those old photos without coming out of the experience more alert to all that is life-giving in today's relationships and activities.

Let me make a couple of suggestions to you for your summertime consideration.

1) Some evening when you have leisure time, take out an old photo album and spend some time with it. Rest with any photo that speaks to your heart and, if you're inclined to do so, speak about it to the Lord.

2) Have some fun with this forced choice: You can pick only one of all the pictures you possess. Which one will you keep, and why do you choose it?

3) Share your experiences of the previous suggestions with some loved one or ones. Peace to all.

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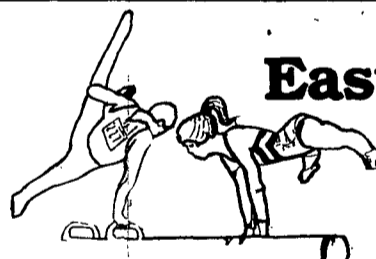
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