

# Joys of family highlight weekend

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

This past weekend Julie Katherine Neff and her Aunt Grace Elizabeth Early brought extra measures of joy to what is always a festive occasion for our family.

Julie brought happiness just by being Julie and by reacting to her environment and the affection shown her in the way that 90-day-old persons usually do such things.

Grace gave the days a special charge of happiness when she received her master's degree in business administration from the College of St. Rose at their commencement on Saturday.

The first-time presence of Julie and Grace's achievement enhanced a weekend that for years has been set aside for special celebrations in our family: the May 13 birthdays of Grace and Mary Ellen Early; the May 14 birthday of Father Tom Powers; and the celebration of Mothers' Day in honor of my mother, my sister, Helen, and, for the first time, Julie's mother, Jane Early Neff.

After dinner we sat in a circle and talked while the guests of honor took turns reading the cards and opening the gifts presented to honor them. They were marvelous moments of laughter and joy.

Part of me wishes that I had



## A LONG THE WAY

recorded the proceedings so I could share some of the laughter with you. On the other hand, I am sure you'll understand that some of the sentiments expressed in the cards and the nature of some of the gifts - especially those given sister to sister - are better left to the imagination.

We did have a wonderful time. There's just something special about getting together with family. And it was a special gift to have my mother there to preside over the day's activities.

She attended the commencement at St. Rose and was very much involved in the party afterward. She remains physically challenged by her incapacity to produce red blood cells in sufficient

number. But she is strong in her spirit, gets around fairly well and is much interested in the lives and well being of her family. At her request, I thank you for the kind greetings and words of support you have sent to her during these days of her illness.

You ask often how my beautiful nieces are doing. I would add to what is mentioned above that Mary Ellen recently moved into a new apartment in Cohoes, N.Y., and is enjoying it very much.

Kathleen, the youngest, will be graduating from high school in June. She has not yet announced the direction she will take thereafter, but I have no doubt that, whatever she does, she will do it very well.

Margaret continues as a math major at the College of St. Rose and as an employee at an area bank. She and I are delighted to have been invited to stand as godparents of Julie at her baptism this Sunday. A special memory for me on that occasion will that of acting as Margaret's godfather at her baptism almost 22 years ago.

Thank you so much for the interest you have always shown in my family. It means a lot to me because I realize more and more as the years go by just how much they have contributed to my life, how much they mean to me.

Peace to all.

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