

Grateful for kindness and support

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

At this late hour on Monday evening Grace, Mary Ellen, Margaret and Kathleen Early are driving back to Waterford and Cohoes; and Scott, Jane and Julie Neff are making the shorter trip to Buffalo. Whether making the longer trip or the shorter one, they'll all have just a few hours of sleep before beginning their work tomorrow.

They all made a considerable sacrifice to be at Sacred Heart Cathedral tonight for a memorial Mass for their grandmother. But I would guess that as they now return home, they do so with as deep a sense of joy about what they experienced here as their mother and dad and I carry in our hearts just now.

Tonight we received a great deal. We experienced the peace of the Feast of the Assumption, which reminds us of God's gracious favor offered in precious gifts and in the freedom lovingly to accept them. We savored and prayed about the fullness of life Mary enjoys.

Remembering that, we could appreciate more the faith of her initial response to God at the Annunciation, and the fidelity with which she stood by her son through the years of his public life and at the moment of his death.

And, of course, we were privileged to



LONG THE WAY

hear God's word and to share the Body and Blood of Christ.

But I'd guess that the awareness most present in all our hearts tonight is the extraordinary kindness we have experienced at the hands this community — not only tonight but all through the weeks of my mother's illness and ever since her death.

This evening a cathedral full of people endured intense heat and humidity to pray for Mom and to express their support for our family as we go through the experience of adjusting to our loss.

But your kindness goes beyond that wonderful turnout this evening. It includes

your gifts of prayers, letters and cards, flowers, fruit and countless kind greetings.

It will take a while to respond to all of your kindnesses and even longer to absorb them all. For now, and on behalf of all of my family, I thank you for all of it.

The only regret I have about this evening is that my five gorgeous nieces came after me in the receiving line and I was not able to hear their conversations with the many who came to greet them. The reason for my concern is the laughter I heard so often coming from the area in which they were standing. I generally have no problem with laughter; as a matter of fact, I love it. But I've been around them long enough to recognize a note of mischief in their laughter, which generally means I'll be paying for it for quite a while!

As they drive home tonight they go with my great love and admiration. They have always had those, but both grew in great measure through Mom's last illness because of the tender care and affection they showed to her. They are beautiful young women who bring much happiness to their uncle and to many other people.

Once again, I thank you and express the hope that you have been able to cope reasonably well with the heat and humidity we have been experiencing.

Peace to all.

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