

Niece's baby another reason for joy

I have had a lot of fun in the past several days. And why not? The New York Yankees have won their division title and are on their way to their first World Series win in many years. The Buffalo Bills bounced back from their hard loss to the Pittsburgh Steelers with a solid win over the Dallas Cowboys. No doubt a victory over the Indianapolis Colts this Sunday will put them solidly on the road to the Super Bowl. And who can possibly doubt that they will win it this year?

The fun to which I refer comes also from what I wrote about in "Along the Way" last week: The faith and generosity of people like yourself who make this diocese such an exciting community in which to minister.

It was in that good spirit that I looked forward with pleasure to driving my niece, Jane Neff, and her daughter, Julie, to Waterford last Friday. Jane was going there for the Saturday wedding of a lifelong girlfriend. I was going for a dinner to benefit the scholarship fund of my *alma mater*, Catholic Central High School.

The drive was quite delightful. Traffic was moderate. The weather was good. Julie was as peaceful and content as you could reasonably expect a little one her age to be for such a long drive. Jane and I split the driving. We talked most of the way and I was so happy to be able to visit with her for such an extended period. With our schedules opportunities like that are not easy to

along the way

By BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK



come by.

You can imagine that it was like the frosting on the cake when Jane told me shortly before we arrived home that she and Scott are expecting another child in the spring. They are thrilled with the news and so was I when I heard it. It has been a joy to watch them love and care for Julie, and to watch her respond to them. Now it will be a pleasure to watch them welcome a new child and to watch Julie make the adjustments all firstborn children need to make when their first sibling comes along. That will be fun for everyone!

The hard part of that wonderful moment was Jane's request that I not tell anyone the news until she and Scott told the family when he joined her in Waterford the next day. When they learned that Julie was coming they told the family by phone. There was such an explosion of joy on that occasion that this time they wanted to tell everyone

in person. Jane, knowing that I was returning to Rochester early the next morning, very kindly shared the news with me in advance.

I am happy to tell you that I kept my end of the bargain. But when I called home the next day I almost slipped. When Grace answered the phone everything in me wanted to talk about the good news I had heard the day before. But somehow I knew I should not talk about it until someone at home brought it up. When Grace did not bring it up immediately I knew that Scott and Jane had not yet had the opportunity to share the good news.

The next day my sister told me about the moment when Scott and Jane broke the news to them. According to Helen, Jane's sisters gave her and Scott a "Standing O" accompanied by shouts of joy and followed by many hugs. While I wish I could have been there to witness the moment, I am deeply content to know that the little one growing within my niece will be so welcome by so many.

I am now preparing to welcome another little girl into the world. That will be wonderful. I most certainly welcome a boy. But my sister and Jane between them have delivered six girls in a row and I think that the trend will continue. Besides, this streak of six has been so spectacular I hate to see it broken!

Peace to all.

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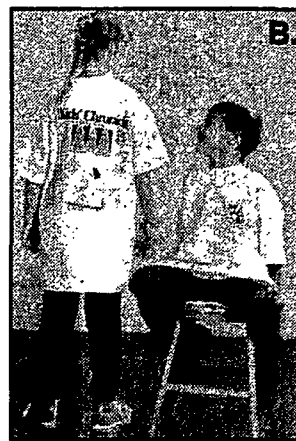
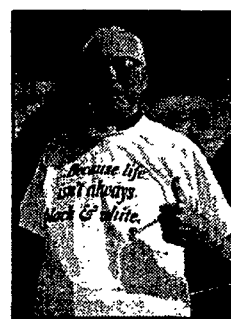
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