

Uncle awaits wise counsel of niece

I must begin today by expressing my gratitude to you for your enormous kindness and for the support of your prayers during this time of recovery. I am grateful for your cards, much strengthened by the fruit you have sent me and elated by the beauty of flowers.

There is not a great deal to report this week. I am delighted to celebrate Mass each day with the community of Sacred Heart Cathedral and have tried on most days to take on some activity in addition to that. What I need to be mindful of is the fact that I can tire very quickly, sometimes unexpectedly. In light of that reality, I try to select activities that will go on uninterrupted even if I should tire in the midst of them. That is why I will meet with staff but am reluctant as yet to do a Confirmation.

Work goes on with my doctors to reduce the inflammation in my system, and I remain very hopeful that we will be progressively successful in doing that.

I have mentioned to you that if there is a brighter side to illness, it is the awareness it generates of both the kindness and the struggles of others. I continue to be grateful for that gift and try each day to make gratitude part of my prayers.

I thought you might get a kick out of other short-term benefits:

Though I must confess it takes more discipline than I imagined it would, I have enjoyed carrying out the rest time necessary to aid recovery. I have done some reading that I have enjoyed immensely, listened to music, taken some wonderful walks, kept in touch with friends. Those pleasures have been quite restorative in themselves. At the same time, my current experience reminds me to carry

along the way



BY BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

some expression of such practices into the future.

Secondly, I have to tell you that God was very young the last time I ate systematically and intentionally to gain weight. I might have done it in high school so I could be heavier when I played football, but since then, at least in general pattern, I have eaten to combat my normal tendency to resemble the model set by the Pillsbury Doughboy or the Michelin Tire character. These days, in order to combat a short-term weight loss, I have been told to "eat abundantly." I am absolutely loving it!

Last, but not least, the first-born of my five gorgeous nieces, Grace Elizabeth, is coming out to spend the weekend with me. I am delighted at that prospect. I love to spend time with this beloved niece who over time has become a dear friend. We laugh a lot and just have a good time.

Much as I anticipate the pleasure of her visit, I am also mindful that she will have me under loving but very careful review. Grace will not in any way intrude in the medical process, but I'll be surprised if, when she returns home, she does not leave me with a supplementary set of mending orders.

Let a couple of stories suggest to you what I mean. Ann Stark, a beloved neighbor of our family, is someone for whom Grace has had a special attraction since she was a tiny girl. Once day Ann, who had received visits from little Grace several days in a row said to my sister, "Helen, young as she is, Grace already shows the qualities of a future CEO."

When Grace was 11 years old, Helen and Jim Early, her parents, were going to a neighbor's home for a couple of hours in the evening. They took infant Kathleen with them, but apparently decided that the others were mature enough to be left alone for that brief time. I am not sure what Grace's commission was for that night, but here is a letter she left for her parents for their return:

"Dear Dad and Mom, Jane and Mary Ellen were supposed to clean the family room and they spent one hour and a half in the family room and they didn't pick any thing up so at 10:00 I had to wash the diaper room and clean the family room and the parlor. They wouldn't even help. I hope you two had a better time than I did. You better tell Margaret to stop locking doors because both doors were locked in the new bedrooms and Jane used a bobby pin and opened the doors. You should tell Jane and Mary Ellen to clean the family room every night because they need the practice bad. Love, Grace. Kisses for you Mom and Dad xxxxxx"

See what I mean? I think you can understand why I can't wait to see Grace and why I'll be absolutely fascinated by what her wise counsel might be to her uncle.

Thanks again for your sustaining kindness. It means more than I can possibly tell you. Peace to all.

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