

# Meeting to be special in many ways

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

A couple of notes about current activities:

1. You may recall that every few years the spring meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops follows a format quite different from the ordinary spring meeting. These periodic sessions are called Special Assemblies and differ from our usual meetings in that they are longer, deal with selected pastoral themes and feature a range of speakers who stimulate our thought and conversations about the matters at hand.

This will be my fourth experience of such a meeting since I was ordained a bishop. The first two were held at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn. The third was held at Santa Clara University in California.

We begin another such Special Assembly at La Jolla, Calif., this week. I'll be leaving for that session on Wednesday morning and will be back home next Thursday. While there, we'll focus on the theme "Shepherding a Future of Hope." Within that general theme, we'll be looking at such daily subtopics as Prophetic Imagination: Threshold to the Future; Challenges and Opportunities to Hope in Church and Society; Time of Renewal: Spirituality of Hope; Experiencing Hope in the Paschal Mystery; and Rooting Hope in the Local Community.



## A LONG THE WAY

The assembly will enjoy the presence and input of a range of speakers including Susan Muto, Michael Himes, Virgil Elizondo, Luciano Mendes de Almeida, Margaret Steinfelds, Louis De Thomasis, Anscar Chupungo, James Gill and Molly Kelly. I have heard some and look forward to what all will say during our time together.

Also very important to me is the opportunity this assembly will afford for relaxed discussions with other bishops about our everyday pastoral experience. I always find it rewarding to do that, not because we always come up with answers, but because we leave such conversations encouraged and strengthened for continued service.

I ask you please to pray for us during

our assembly. I'll be thinking of you and will try to convey a sense of the assembly in next week's column.

2. Last Wednesday evening at Our Lady of Lourdes, Brighton, I had the privilege of presiding and preaching at a eucharistic liturgy celebrating the 65th anniversary of the ordination to priesthood of Fathers Thomas Brennan and Benedict Ehmann.

Many friends gathered to honor these two wonderful men and to thank God for the blessings they have been to our local church for all the years of their priestly service.

Father Tom continues his ministry at St. Mary's, Corning, and Father Ben is active at Holy Apostles, Rochester. I have no doubt that both will enjoy significant mention in the next volume of the history of our diocese and I would like them to have no doubt that all of us are most grateful for their continuing and rich ministry among us. Ad multos annos!

3. My last confirmation visit of the spring was to Sacred Heart, Perkinsville, on Sunday morning. Candidates from St. Pius V, Cohocton, and Sacred Heart gathered for a festive breakfast and then for a wonderful liturgical celebration. I thank Father Charlie Manning and all members of both communities for making the morning such a memorable one.

Peace to all.

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