

# Conference fosters reflections, hope

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

These days at La Jolla, California, have been reasonable. Speakers have been thoughtful and stimulating. Accommodations are fine. The food is good, and we are near the ocean in a place of great beauty.

I write these words on Sunday just after a splendid morning prayer presided over by Luciano Mendes de Almeida, archbishop of Mariana, Brazil. He spoke to us about hope, one of the central themes of these days. The archbishop is known for his care for Brazil's children of the streets, a fact which for me lent even more weight to the words of hope he spoke to us. He also got me thinking about our community and the people to whom we should be making special efforts to offer hope.

To be sure, many of our children live in fragile circumstances. But there are others among us who need hope-strengthening support from us. I think of single mothers who choose life, yet who need help to sustain the choice; of sisters and brothers whose senior years are lonely and uncertain; of those whose daily lives are made fearful by violence; of those who have no protection from catastrophic illness.

If all of that sounds a bit sad, I'd want to add immediately that the archbishop and others who have spoken thus far have called us to a joyful hope, rooted in Christ's victory over death and expressed in consistent, loving service to our sisters and brothers.



## LONG THE WAY

The thoughtful reflections we have been offered by our speakers is but one of the features that make this experience such a gratifying one. Another is the humaneness of the schedule. Some time has been allowed for us to think and to talk about what we have heard.

I confess to you that I have enjoyed immensely the fact that we have free evenings. Those provide a privileged opportunity to relax and to think about what we have experienced through the day. They have been especially blessed in that they carry no obligation to prepare for a talk or a meeting on the following day.

Another delightful aspect of this experience is the beauty of the area. Save for a Friday-night jaunt to Jack Murphy Stadium to see the Padres defeat the Houston Astros, I have stayed close to our meeting place. But early each morning I

have taken a run through the Torrey Pines Preserve. That affords a view of the Pacific Ocean to one side and of hills and canyons to the other. What a joy it is to begin the day contemplating such beauty.

Our weather has been wonderful. The sun breaks through the morning haze at about 8 a.m. and remains with us through the day. Temperatures, which remain in the mid 70s, have made me mindful that you have experienced intense heat during our stay out here.


We'll be celebrating the Sunday liturgy at 11 a.m. After that, the day is one of rest. Some will go on a tour of the city; some to the zoo. I'll be going back to the ball park to see another Astros-Padres game. There's something about a baseball game, especially a day game, that practically defines relaxation for me.

On Monday and Tuesday we resume consideration of our theme, "Shepherding a Future of Hope." We will devote Wednesday to a discussion of principles that govern the translation of Biblical texts and of some pastoral concerns attaching to our use of language.

Our formal program ends at dinner time on Wednesday. I'll be leaving here later that evening to take the overnight flight back home. I am scheduled to arrive in Rochester on Thursday morning.

But at this writing, there is much to be experienced before Thursday morning. What we have enjoyed here thus far makes me confident that our time until then will be most rewarding.

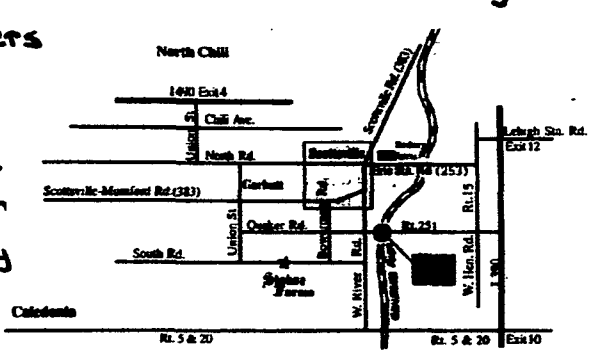
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