

# Conference touches on health care, lectionary

I thank you very much for your interest in and prayers for the recent meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) and the United States Catholic Conference (USCC), which was held last week in Kansas City, Missouri. I thought you might be interested in a brief update on our activities there.

We started with a Thursday morning workshop on the issue of health care. As you know, that is a complex and rapidly changing field that has strong impact on Catholic health-care institutions. Speakers at the workshop focused on a number of themes, but underlying them all — at least as I understood them — was the question of how to maintain the Catholic identity and values of our institutions. What the speakers had to say confirmed my gratitude for the way in which the boards of St. Mary's and Park Ridge hospitals developed the Unity Health System.

Among the other matters on our agenda, the one that received the most public attention was the issue of inclusive language in the biblical translations we use in the lectionary for readings at Mass.

Almost five years ago our conference voted by vast majority to approve a translation that I found to be consistent, inclusive, reasonable and pastorally sound in its use of language. Immediately following that vote, we sent the material to Rome for the necessary confirmation of our decision.

It became clear that two of the Roman congregations had some reservations about the translation. Recently the members of the College of Cardinals visited Rome as a body to promote the substance of our origi-

## along the way



By BISHOP MATTHEW H. CLARK

nal language recommendations. Thereafter, a delegation of three U.S. bishops worked for several weeks with the representatives of the above mentioned congregations in an effort to work out a compromise agreeable to both sides of the discussion.

At Kansas City we voted on that compromise. The vote was inconclusive pending a polling by mail of those members who were not able to attend the meeting. It was reported accurately in our local press that I voted against the compromise. I did so because I felt that it did not have the good qualities of our original proposal.

We gave approval to "Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry," a document I hope will help us to build on the very good work already taking place in our diocese in this critical area of pastoral concern. I think the document is a very good one that merits distribution to those adults and young people engaged in ministry with and to our youths.

Other matters to which we gave attention were: support to begin the canonization process for Father Michael McGivney, founder of the Knights of Columbus; the establishment of a new national collection

for the support of home mission dioceses; the restructuring of NCCB-USCC; the use of the Catechism of the Catholic Church in religious education series; and a pastoral plan for communications.

A brief but very bright spot in the meeting was a short address by Bishop Belo of East Timor, who won the Nobel Peace Prize this year.

Also adding to the pleasure of those days was a Wednesday evening visit to Kaufmann Stadium where we saw the Kansas City Royals defeat the Houston Astros, 6-2. It was fun to see one of the first interleague games.

There were other committee meetings and smaller pieces of business at Kansas City, which I will not mention. But I hope the above gives you some flavor of our meeting there.

I remind you once again that this will be the last "Along the Way" until August. As I noted previously, the *Courier* will use this space during the weeks of July to publish the position papers resulting from our recent work on the centrality of the Eucharist.

Meanwhile, I thank all who take a moment through the week to read my column and am especially grateful for those who take the time to comment on what I write here. If the summer allows you the time and leisure, and you are inclined to do so, please drop a line with your suggestions for topics for future columns. It is always helpful to receive them.

Accept, please, my very best wishes for a peaceful and happy summer.

Peace to all.

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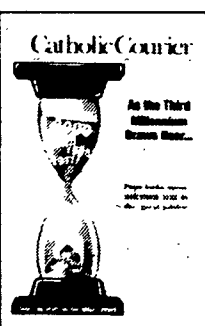
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