

Time, money well-spent on youth

This past weekend we gathered at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Rochester for our annual Diocesan Youth Convention. I just finished sending an e-mail message to Michael Theisen, director of youth ministry, and all of his co-workers, expressing my gratitude for a job well done.

Over 600 young people from every part of our diocese turned out for the event. From my perspective, the enormous amount of work by the young people and adults who planned and supervised the event paid great dividends. I say that primarily because participants were beautifully responsive to all that was asked of them during our time together. When it was time to play, they did so in joyful ways. When it was time to pray, they took up the invitation with peaceful ease. They shared with others about matters that are important to them. They were attentive to their sisters and brothers when they offered similar gifts. I had a deep sense that they wanted to learn new things, to absorb the experience of others and grow through it all.

This was the 10th Diocesan Youth Convention we have celebrated un-



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Along the Way

der the present format. In special observance of the anniversary, we invited to this convention everyone who had served as teenagers on the Diocesan Youth Committee over the past 10 years and who, therefore, had worked on earlier conventions as part of their leadership responsibilities. During the Sunday liturgy we called them forward according to their years of service, starting with 1994 and continuing to the present.

I noticed that the teenage participants were very attentive as these early leaders came forward, and that when the assembly offered them their applause, they did so with great enthusiasm. There was pre-

sent among this year's convention participants a sense of gratitude for what these young adults had prepared and passed on to them.

I have often read that special religious experience like retreats, days of prayer and such gatherings as this weekend's convention have lasting significance in the lives of young people. What I have read has been validated in many conversations I have had over the years with adults who speak to me about the formative influence youth gatherings had in their lives. They speak to me of lasting friendships made or deepened; a sense of solidarity with peers about important convictions and values; an appreciation of our faith community complementing their experience of parish; new and sustaining ways of prayer experienced; a clearer sense of their dignity and goodness; and assistance in coping with societal and cultural forces that can be destructive.

Time and circumstances did not allow it on Sunday, but I would have loved the opportunity to sit with our returning leaders and hear them respond to questions such as these:

Why did you choose to come back

for this event?

How would you describe your experience as participant/leader in our youth program?

In what ways, if any, does that past experience remain important to you?

If you could have had 10 minutes to address this convention, what would you have said to the kids?

Based on your life experience since high school, what changes would you suggest to improve our programs with and for today's teens?

It's too late for me to ask these questions of those men and women who led our convention in earlier years. But perhaps those involved with young people who attended this week's gathering could suitably adapt the questions and ask for their feedback to them.

I close by thanking all who support such activities for our young people. We all know that these gatherings could not happen without you. We are also aware that we never waste a penny or a moment that we invest in support of our precious young people.

Peace to all.

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MEDIATION IN CHURCH

BROWNSVILLE
 (CNS) — At a dispute between parish workers and a new pastor in Brownsville, a decision to court-

The United States Supreme Court has ruled that is not a labor dispute. The court said that the workers were part of the church's mission. The court said that the workers were not employees of the church.

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JUDGE TOSCANI

ABUSE SUIT

WASHINGTON — A New York judge has ruled that the diocese of Albany is liable for the sexual abuse of a priest in another diocese.

In New York State Supreme Court, Judge Christian F. Hogan ruled that the diocese of Albany is liable for the sexual abuse of a priest in another diocese.

In July, the judge ruled that the diocese of Albany is liable for the sexual abuse of a priest in another diocese.

CONGRESS KNIGHTS'

WASHINGTON — A two-day event will be held Aug. 7-8 at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The event is for the Knights of Columbus.

Eucharistic adoration will be held during the event. The Knights of Columbus will be celebrating their 100th anniversary.