

Good seeds planted at conference

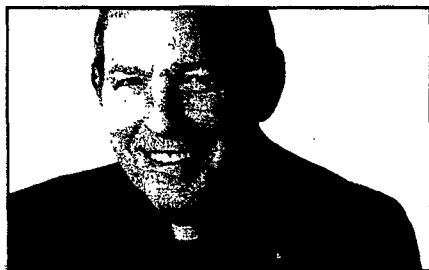
I wish I could capture in words in the space and time available to me all that I have experienced during the past 10 days. I spent them in Washington, D.C., for a meeting of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and, in Houston, Texas, for the National Catholic Youth Conference.

Of the former event, I will say that the highlight was the ceremony at which an award was presented to the Catholic Community at Ithaca College. This citation, presented by the National Association of Campus Ministry, recognized an outreach program to Catholic students who had drifted away from the church because of the misconceptions of church teaching. Mary Humanev, one of our chaplains at Ithaca, and Matthew Camporese, a student at Ithaca College from Long Island, accepted the award on behalf of the community.

Five other campus communities received awards as well. One of the delights of that annual event is the opportunity it provides to converse with young people like Matt, and to hear their faith and the imaginative things they do to build up the kingdom.

At the end of the reception Mary, Matt and I had a delightful conversation over dinner at a nearby restaurant. Congratulations to all at the Catholic Community at Ithaca College.

From Washington about 35 of us bishops flew to Houston to participate in the National Catholic Youth Conference. We were joining some 24,000 teens for three days of study,



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Along the Way

prayer, song, dance, humor and celebration of the faith.

Our delegation numbered nearly 850. From all that I observed, the kids had a wonderful time. I was told by several of our adult leaders how many positive comments people made about our group — their courtesy, respect for other's property, and general spirit of patience and cooperation when things were slow or did not work out as planned.

As you might expect, in gatherings as large and complicated as NCYC, there will be snags and disappointments. We experienced weather concerns, price hikes for transportation and over-booking of hotel space. Most difficult of all were the constant problems we had with busing, which caused delay and confusion. Because of the busing concerns of those days, the judgment was made that in order to be on time for their departing flights, some of our group would have to miss the closing liturgy. That was sadness for them. I can tell you that it saddened all of us. During the Mass, we were all deeply united in spirit with our friends who were not

there.

But through it all — even in the disappointments — our kids and the adults with them were just wonderful.

I had the honor of preaching the homily at the closing liturgy, which was held at Reliant Stadium, the home of NFL's Houston Texans. It was quite a thrill to stand in the midst of over 20,000 young people from all parts of our nation, and to try to offer them a message that would help them live their faith. I enjoyed every single minute of it but — believe me — I was very happy when I finished.

An important part of NCYC is the Youth Congress. This gathered a total of 300 NCYC participants from all parts of the country to spend a good part of Friday probing Catholic social teaching. Six of the participants came from our diocese. Four of them were Mark Thiell from Christ the King, Irondequoit; Matt Bukowski from Guardian Angels, Henrietta; Emily Carlock from St. Patrick, Mt. Morris; and Jamie Farley from Holy Cross, Charlotte. In addition to these four, Elizabeth Hohl and Paul Kurtenbach represented Scouting in the eight dioceses of our state.

These most impressive young people worked hard in preparation for the event in Houston. They read "A Place at the Table" a recent USCCB statement dealing with overcoming poverty. They met with some of our Catholic Charities staff and interviewed people who offer and receive services. Part of their preparation was a conversation with their bish-

op. I enjoyed that opportunity immensely, and was much impressed by the grasp our young friends had on this complex theme.

Now the event is over and most who enjoyed the days in Houston are back home. I can imagine that it took a strong effort for our friends to leave their beds and get off to school today. But I envision that they managed well. It's amazing to me how quickly they can recharge their batteries.

I am writing this in the Cincinnati airport on Monday morning. Last night the flight I was on was overbooked. No one volunteered to surrender their seats for compensation, so I was among the three passengers who were bumped. I must confess that I was weary and a slightly unhappy camper at that moment. But I have enjoyed very much this quiet opportunity to think and write about people who mean a great deal to me. And, it has given me a chance to think about what happened in Houston, its meaning for all of us who were there and for our whole diocese.

When you run into NCYC participants — teens and adults — I hope that you will encourage them to tell you about the event. In the telling, I think, come insights into what the Lord was offering us all in those days. Many good seeds were planted there. You can help them come to full fruit by your continuing interest and support.

I thank each and every person from our diocese who was a part of NCYC. I couldn't be more proud of you.

Peace to all.

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SAME-SEX MARRIAGE BAN OVERTURNED

WASHINGTON, Nov. 18 — The U.S. Supreme Court has overturned a Massachusetts law that bans same-sex couples from marrying. The court's decision is a landmark ruling that could affect other states that have similar laws.

In its 5-4 decision, the court said that the ban on same-sex marriage violated the Constitution. The court's decision is a landmark ruling that could affect other states that have similar laws.

COSSUARY IN MASSACHUSETTS COULD BE GONE

IRVING, Texas — An ancient Holy Land tradition with the controversy of James, brother of Jesus, is being studied by a Jesuit scholar, said a Notre Dame scholar. The study is part of a project to determine if the burial box of Jesus is a fake.

IAA research chemical and analyses, said through the patenting acquired with

THIS WEEK

Sun., Nov. 23: Psalms 93:1-2, 5-8; John 18:33B-35
Mon., Nov. 24: 20; (Ps) Daniel 12:1-4
Tue., Nov. 25: (Ps) Daniel 3:57-67
Wed., Nov. 26: 14, 16-17, 23-28; (Ps) Luke 21:12-14
Thu., Nov. 27: Psalms 138:1-5; 143-9; Luke 17:11-14
Fri., Nov. 28: (Ps) Daniel 3:75-77
Sat., Nov. 29: (Ps) Daniel 3:82-85