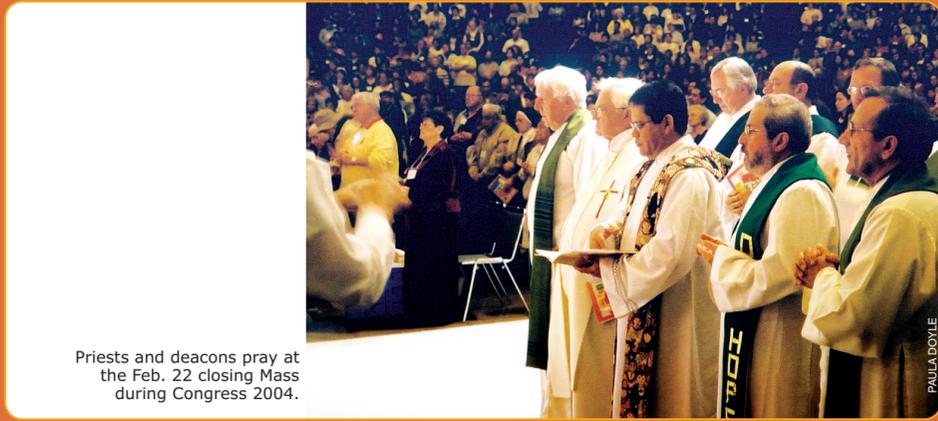




SR. NANCY MUNRO, CSJ

The gathering rite Feb. 20 marked a spirited opening to Religious Education Congress 2004.



Priests and deacons pray at the Feb. 22 closing Mass during Congress 2004.

PAULA DOYLE

STEEPED in MERCY, FAITH & SPIRIT

CONGRESS 2004

■ Amidst the events in an ever-challenging world — including war, upcoming elections, economic uncertainties and a looming national report on sex abuse in the church — nearly 39,000 catechists, clergy, religious and youth from around the U.S. found their way to Anaheim last weekend in search of information, education and — maybe most of all — motivation. They found it in the 2004 Religious Education Congress whose workshops, speakers, liturgies and special events spoke [at least in some way] to the theme of "Steeped in Mercy, Balm for the World." For many who have been humbled and even shaken by the events of recent years, it was exactly the balm they sought, and they left Anaheim renewed not only in faith but in their baptismal call to be ministers of God's healing love and mercy — to be, indeed, balm for the world. ❖



In between workshops, the St. Joseph Youth Choir of Bakersfield takes a musical break.

ELLIE HIDALGO



Vocal ensemble at Hawaiian liturgy was appropriately attired.

SR. NANCY MUNRO, CSJ



Graceful dancers from the San Jose Vietnamese Folk Dance Troupe/Lasallian Youth perform Feb. 21.

PAULA DOYLE



Participants take a break from workshops.

SR. NANCY MUNRO, CSJ



San Francisco's Sacred Heart High School students take part in Hawaiian liturgy Feb. 20.

SR. NANCY MUNRO, CSJ



Youth Day participants get into the spirit at Arena assembly Feb. 19.

MICHELLE GARHEE



Vietnamese drummers made joyful noise at the gathering rite Feb. 20.

SR. NANCY MUNRO, CSJ



Carina Cibils and her three-month-old baby, Caia, were among thousands in attendance at the 2004 Religious Education Congress.

PAULA DOYLE



Balloon guy Gregg Mendoza (left) adds lightness and cheer, something Matt Aviles of Don Bosco Technical High School appreciates.

ELLIE HIDALGO



Youth minister David Lara (left) sings out at Congress 2004.

SR. NANCY MUNRO, CSJ