

Second day of LA Congress: living and reflecting on faith

Porsia Tunzi | Feb. 23, 2013 NCR Today
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"All I can offer you is a story about a guy living a faith-filled life -- he wasn't perfect, but he was a good man," said keynote speaker Mark Shriver, author of the *New York Times* best-selling memoir "A Good Man: Rediscovering My Father, Sargent Shriver."

Shriver told different stories about his father, who created the Peace Corps and expanded Special Olympics around the globe; but he said what made his father a "good" man were the simple accounts of everyday kindness and love his father showed his children, wife, waitresses and random workers.

"Love was more important than a career or position [to my father]." Shriver said, "He had a profound faith in God and he put that faith into action. Goodness in small acts -- we can all do that."

The crowd cheered -- the second day of LA Congress had begun.

While walking around the booths in the exhibit hall, I met a kind woman sitting in a chair passing out pens and bookmarks. St. Joseph Sr. Martha Marie Linhares, 80, spoke about the many ministries she has been involved in throughout her 51 years of being a sister.

"My favorite part about coming to Congress is seeing old friends," Linhares said. "And vocations -- our sisters are getting older and we need fresh blood," she laughed. Linhares is now retired and spends her time helping out with the Sisters of St. Joseph in Orange, Calif.

With the theme of "mystery" lingering in the air, various Congress attendees shared their comments.

"When I think about the word 'mystery,' I believe we are called to see God and his true immensity," said Claudia Avila, 26, a graduate student at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. "There is so much we don't know -- and yet, God keeps pulling us toward him."

"Faith in and of itself is a mystery," said Eric Cordeta, a member of the leadership council of Filipino ministry in Los Angeles. "Our life is a journey. We must walk together as brothers and sisters in this mystery."

"Amidst the darkness and smog of our present day, there lies a mystery ... a mystery of the human experience and of God if we only have the courage to rip through the veil," said Paul J. Kim, a speaker and music artist living in Orange County, Calif. Kim was a speaker at Youth Day on Thursday.

"Entering into the mystery of God is entering into the unknown," said Jesuit Fr. Radmar Jao, who is in charge of vocation promotion on the West Coast of the U.S.

"We want answers, we want the tangible but with God -- there isn't answers; there is relationship," Jao continued.

Every year, Congress invites people to imagine more, learn more and love more. Through spaces like the multicultural exhibit or various booths or the set aside sacred space -- people are called to build bridges, meditate deeply, and celebrate being Catholic.

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