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Sister Jean Marie Kearse, right, superior general of the Sisters of Mercy of Rochester, and Sister Jant Korn explain to an Army sentry the purpose of their visit to the depot. The soldier was one of several stationed outside the troop gate to protect the installation.

Sisters Publicly Pray for Peace

Peace, and the issues raised by the Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice abutting the Seneca Army Depot, continue to occupy the attention of diocesans.

And public demonstrations of the Church's concerns in the question appear to be growing.

At the same time but at two different sites last week, members of the Rochester Sisters of Mercy gathered for prayer for peace. About 100 Sisters held a service at the Seneca Army Depot troop gate, and another 70 participated in a holy hour in their motherhouse chapel.

Both services were sanctioned by a majority vote of the congregation's General

Chapter which closed last week.

At the Seneca rites, Sister Jean Marie Kearse, superior general of the congregation, said:

"Peace is a very fragile gift. It is even difficult to preserve in one's own heart. Peace among us as families and friends and peace among us as nations can only be brought through the infinite power of prayer.

"That is why we as Sisters of Mercy are praying tonight: some in our convents, some

in our motherhouse chapel, and some here at the Seneca Depot.

"We who gather here at the depot do so because we wish to give public witness by our prayer. Our witness is to the belief that faith in God must replace our faith in missiles and nuclear armament. We cannot risk or position ourselves for nuclear war anywhere on this planet.

"Please pray with us that all nations cease their production and stockpiling of nuclear arms for war."

Cdl. Cooke Is Terminally Ill

New York (NC) -- Cardinal Terence Cooke of New York is suffering from a serious form of leukemia, the Archdiocese of New York announced Aug. 26.

A four-paragraph statement said Cardinal Cooke, who also heads the U.S. church's Military Vicariate, suffered from "acute secondary leukemia complicated by a chronic lymphoma condition."

Father Peter Finn, director of communications for the archdiocese, told a news conference Cardinal Cooke could die within "a matter of months."

"The prognosis is that the disease is terminal. It's a severe leukemia and it's moving quickly," Father Finn said.

A week earlier the archdiocese announced that the cardinal was receiving medical treatment for a severe infection.

The new statement said Cardinal Cooke, 62, was being cared for at home and added that Pope John Paul II had been notified of the diagnosis.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark sent a brief message from Rome where he is studying. He mentioned the "very sad news" and said, "We will all keep him in our prayers."

Auxiliary Bishop Dennis W. Hickey who is conducting diocesan affairs in Bishop Clark's absence, said he was shocked by the news. "It was only three weeks ago" that he participated with all the state's bishops in a Canon Law Workshop, Bishop Hickey said.

Bishop Hickey remembered that "Cardinal Cooke has been a frequent visitor to Rochester, having installed the last two ordinaries, Bishops Joseph L. Hogan and Clark. He also noted that the cardinal "has given untiring service" in working for such causes as pro-life, the elderly,



CARDINAL COOKE

the terminally ill and said that in his role as military vicar "he has been extremely sensitive in the needs of the men and women in the service, especially in the light of the recent concern about nuclear disarmament and the role of the military in the discussions."

Leukemia is a cancerous disease of the blood-forming organs and can include abnormalities in the bone marrow, liver, spleen, lymph glands and other tissues. Though progress of the disease sometimes can be slowed it is invariably fatal.

The statement said Cardinal Cooke "asks simply for the prayers of his brothers and sisters in God's human family and in particular of the people of the archdiocese and of the Military Vicariate."

"For all, he offers his suffering in union with the Lord Jesus, our savior and redeemer," it added.

The diagnosis was made by the cardinal's physician, Dr. Kevin Cahill, in consultation with other medical experts, according to the statement.

Cardinal Cooke has been archbishop of New York and head of the Military Vicariate since 1968. He was elevated

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Madalyn O'Hair And the Rumor That Won't Die

Washington (NC) -- Imagine the postman bringing you more than 6,000 letters every day on an issue that doesn't even exist.

That is what's happening to the Federal Communications Commission over an eight-year-old rumor that atheist leader Madalyn Murray O'Hair wants to ban religious broadcasting in the United States.

Despite efforts to kill the rumor -- Mrs. O'Hair never filed such a petition with the FCC -- the number of protest letters is growing again.

"We just don't have any theories about why this (the increase in letters) is happening," said Barbara Moran, a consumer assistance specialist at the FCC who monitors the phone calls and mail on the non-existent O'Hair petition.

Mrs. Moran said the agency used to think there was a link between the flow of mail and the arrival of Christmas and Easter. But the recent increase in letters -- along with dozens of phone calls to the FCC this summer -- seemed to end any link with religious holidays, she said.

At one point two years ago it looked as if the FCC might have successfully squelched the rumor. After a peak of 2.3 million letters received in 1978, the FCC received "only" 546,000 letters on the issue in 1981.

But in 1982 the letter count was back up to 1.4 million, according to the FCC.

Postal tabulations for this year show a pace which could put the letters back over the 2 million mark in 1983. According to his Moran, some 88,000 letters arrived in January. By May, the last month for which figures were available, letters were coming in at a 1.4-million-per-month pace.

The total since 1975 is now beyond 16 million.

The whole thing got started in 1974 when two broadcasting producers, Jeremy D. Lansman and Lorenzo W. Milam of Los Gatos, Calif., not Mrs. O'Hair, petitioned the FCC to deny religious groups broadcast channels reserved for educational programming. They did not urge a ban on religious broadcasting itself.

In that petition Lansman and Milam maintained that religious broadcasters were not presenting educational material but rather religious propaganda and thus should not be given the privileges of an educational license.

The FCC in 1975 rejected the petition because it said it would be violating separation of church and state if it examined whether religious broadcasting was educational.

Somehow, though, the FCC's number on the case, RM 2493, and Mrs. O'Hair's name became linked, and the letters never stopped coming. Many letters to the FCC mistakenly refer to the now-extinct RM 2493 and mention Mrs. O'Hair by name.

In addition to the FCC, which launched a massive and at least partially successful public information campaign in 1979 aimed at discrediting the rumor, the non-existent petition also has been a thorn in the side of the religious press.

Editors of Catholic newspapers in the United States have reported numerous calls to their offices from local groups and individuals either seeking more information on the O'Hair petition or urging the paper to campaign against it.

A recent query to diocesan editors by National Catholic News Service brought more than a dozen reports from around the country that the campaign against the O'Hair petition is alive this summer. Among the states where the rumor was reported circulating were Oklahoma, New York, New Jersey, Maryland, California, Iowa, Texas, North Carolina, Ohio, Michigan, Colorado, Washington, Missouri and Minnesota.

In some cases, local councils of the Knights of Columbus and other Catholic groups have circulated postcards ready to be signed and mailed to the FCC. Other times Catholic pastors unaware that the petition is a hoax have urged letters to the FCC in their parish bulletins.

BISHOP CLARK:

I think of him as a pastor and a friend.

The news of Cardinal Cooke's serious illness comes as a great shock. It was only three weeks ago that he actively participated with all the New York State bishops in a Canon Law Workshop. He enthusiastically took part in the discussion and heartily encouraged all the bishops present to bring the spirit of the new code into their respective dioceses.

The prayers of thousands of people will certainly be offered for his speedy return to health and the resumption of his ministerial duties.

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