

Cardinal O'Connor stresses need for permanent Palestinian homeland

By Agostino Bono

Vatican City (NC) — Vatican diplomatic recognition of Israel would not help bring peace to the Middle East unless it is tied to a comprehensive package that includes finding a Palestinian homeland and assuring protection for the millions of Christians in the region, said Cardinal John O'Connor of New York.

The cardinal, president of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, also defended Israel's right to exist and said that finding a Palestinian homeland should involve "nothing adverse to Israel."

Cardinal O'Connor spoke at a June 19 news conference at the Vatican after a three-day visit to Lebanon. He held the news conference after a two-hour private meeting with Pope John Paul II.

Finding a Palestinian homeland is a major ingredient for peace in Lebanon and the entire Middle East, he said. But the cardinal added that he had no idea "where that would be or how it could be done" politically.

Peace is difficult to accomplish "as long as you have the festering wound of more than 1 million Palestinian refugees in Lebanon living under terrible conditions," he said.

These conditions cause frustrations that spawn terrorism and that have contributed to the 11-year-old civil war in Lebanon, he added.

The refugee situation is one of the many military, political and economic "conflicting forces at work which breed conflict" in Lebanon, said Cardinal O'Connor.

Israel should play "a crucial part" in finding a Palestinian homeland by cooperating with Arab countries in search of a solution, the cardinal said. He said Vatican diplomatic recognition of Israel would be positive if "it would do something substantive about the Palestinian refugees and something substantive about protecting the Christians."

Church leaders "are fearful that recognition could result in oppression and great loss of life among Christians in the Middle East,"

Cardinal O'Connor said. "Many millions of Christians cannot be brushed off," he said.

Vatican officials have said the Vatican would not recognize Israel until a wide range of problems in the Middle East are resolved, including resettlement of Palestinian refugees, security for Lebanon and the status of Jerusalem.

Many Middle Eastern Christians also hope for peace in Lebanon because they regard the country as a model of different religions coexisting in the region, he said.

Lebanon, where about half of the 3 million population is Christian, is the only country in the Middle East with a sizable Christian population. The remaining population is mostly Moslem.

The 11-year-old civil war often has pitted Moslem and Christian political factions against each other. A major cause of the civil war is Moslem frustration with Christian control of the major government and military posts.

"We are very much afraid from a Catholic

perspective that if Lebanon falls, 8 million Christians in Egypt and Christians throughout the Middle East are in grave risk. They look to Lebanon as a shining light where it was possible for people of different religions to live in peace and harmony," Cardinal O'Connor said.

The cardinal said he made the trip in an effort to gain information about U.S. citizens held hostage by Moslem groups in Lebanon and to pass along messages of support and solidarity to the hostages.

"We received nothing positive" regarding these efforts, he said.

Cardinal O'Connor said he briefed the pope on his Lebanon visit. "The Holy Father expressed keen appreciation for our making the trip. He feels it is exceedingly important that Lebanon not be forgotten," Cardinal O'Connor said.

"In his public messages he has recognized the importance of maintaining the integrity of Lebanon and the fact that it is a model of religious democracy and equality," the cardinal said.

Neighbors

Julie M. Lenhard, a 1982 graduate of Our Lady of Mercy High School, has graduated summa cum laude with a degree in psychology from Dartmouth College. The daughter of **M. James and Mary Lenhard** of Penfield, was named to the Phi Beta Kappa national honor society.

Lenhard served as scholarship chairwoman of Kappa Alpha Theta sorority and as an undergraduate adviser to freshmen. She also participated in the college's language study-abroad program in Lyon, France.

Nazareth Academy's director of development, **Sister Carol Cimino**, has been named the winner of the 1985 Daniel Award. Offered by the Webster Cable Access Commission, the award recognizes her videotape, "The Spirit of Nazareth," which she produced for the school's recruitment program.

Kathleen Marie Stager of Palmyra has been chosen to receive the American Society of Civil Engineers National Capital Section Award at the Catholic University of America's annual honors convocation. The daughter of **Paul and Marianne Stager**, members of St. Anne's Parish, Kathleen was recognized for excellence in civil engineering and notable contributions to the American Society of Civil Engineers.

Father Eugene O'Hara, OFM Cap., a graduate of St. Peter and Paul Elementary School, celebrated his 25th anniversary as a priest on June 24, 1986. The son of the late **Peter and Nora O'Donnell O'Hara**, he serves as mission secretary of the Capuchin Franciscan Province of Saint Mary and as director of the Capuchin Mission Office in New York City.

Two of Father O'Hara's sisters, **Ann Moss** and **Maureen O'Hara**, are Rochester residents.

Three Catholic high school students will be among 100 graduating seniors featured in a series of public service announcements presented by WHEC-TV (Channel 10) and General Motors during June and July.

Leon Sawko of the Aquinas Institute and Nazareth Academy students **Cecilia Bonaccio** and **Debra Carmen** were among the students honored for their outstanding academic achievement.

Anne Venturelli, a student at Our Lady of Mercy High School and a member of St. Augustine's Parish, is the winner of the McCann Award, given each year by the Catholic Women's Club of Rochester.

The daughter of **Mr. and Mrs. Venturelli** of Rochester, Anne is a member of the St. Augustine's/St. Monica's youth group, teaches religious education and is an altar server. She also teaches swimming at the Arnett YMCA, works part-time at an area nursing home, and delivers newspapers.

Next fall she plans to study chemistry at the University of Buffalo. Along with the award, Venturelli received a \$100 check.

Seniors at Aquinas Institute were recognized for outstanding achievements at the annual year-end assembly this month.

Honored were: **Jim Reynders** and **Donna Enright**, Outstanding Athletes; **Mike McLean**, Army ROTC award; **Mark Miller**, Knights of Columbus award; **Allan Toth**, Marshall Hahn Engineering Merit Scholarship; **Tim Reynders**, Sons of the American Revolution Good Citizenship Award; **Joyce Royland** and **Sue Triassi**, Monroe County Executive Community Award for selfless service to others; **Jack Holt**, Empire State Scholarship of Excellence; **Mary Lou Kapp**, University of Rochester Excellence in Secondary Education Teaching.

Student drawings, pottery, sculpture and paintings were featured at the Nazareth Academy Annual Fine Arts Festival in May.

Judges from area schools and colleges presented the following students awarded first place: first—**Hryhryn**, nin,

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