

# Bishop calls Leland 'man on mission'

By Laurie Hansen and Ines Pinto Allicea  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Rep. Mickey Leland, D-Texas, who died in an airplane crash on his way to a refugee camp in Ethiopia, was "a man on a mission" haunted by the plight of the hungry, said Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza of Galveston-Houston.

"Mickey wanted his career to make a difference. He worked hard at being a Catholic," said Bishop Fiorenza, who had worked with Leland on Houston housing issues.

The bishop, who celebrated Mass Aug. 10 at St. Anne's Catholic Church in Houston, Leland's home parish, made the comments in interviews Aug. 11 and 14 with Catholic News Service.

Leland had "witnessed the angel of death hovering over the skins and bones" of the starving in Africa, Bishop Fiorenza said in reference to a story Leland often told about a little African girl, suffering from extreme malnourishment, who died in front of him while he was talking to a relief worker about her.

On Aug. 13, a U.S. Air Force helicopter

found the wreckage of the small twin-engine airplane that had disappeared six days earlier while carrying Leland and 15 others to an Ethiopian refugee camp, which is home to 57,000 Sudanese exiles.

Leland, 44, was in his sixth term in the House of Representatives and was chairman of its Select Committee on Hunger. He was on his sixth visit to refugee camps along the Ethiopian-Sudanese border when his charter plane crashed into a rocky cliff 300 feet below the peak of a 4,500-foot mountain.

Apparently, none of the nine U.S. and seven Ethiopian passengers survived the crash.

Basilian Father Vincent Thompson, associate pastor at St. Anne's Parish, told CNS Aug. 14 that Leland was known at the parish for "his concern for the underdog and the poor."

He said the baptism of Leland's child at the parish last August had "turned into a dramatic event" in the church's history because of the presence of Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu of Capetown, South Africa. Leland's wife, Alison, is pregnant with the couple's second child.

Father Thompson said St. Anne's, which seats 450, was "packed to overflowing" during an Aug. 13 prayer service organized after the missing plane was located.

Charolette T. Davis, director of the Office for Black Catholics of the Diocese of Galveston-Houston, said Leland had attended the 1988 ordination of Auxiliary Bishop Curtis J. Guillory of Galveston-Houston.

"It was there he let me know of his desire to always be close to the Catholic Church, that first, before anything else, he was a baptized Catholic," Davis said.

To Houston's black community, Leland "was a way maker," she said. "He learned what he had to do to be effective, and then taught others what to do ... in order to keep passing the baton," Davis said.

Leland was chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus for the years 1981-85. He represented Texas's 18th Congressional District, which is 70 percent black and Hispanic, and includes one of Houston's poorest neighborhoods.

"He himself knew of the poor living conditions in and around Houston and when in his travels, he came upon the motherland and found it to be so dev-



AP Wide World Photo  
Rep. Mickey Leland, known for his concern about international hunger, holds a child during a 1984 visit to an African refugee camp.

astated, he decided that was there his mission would be," Davis said, in reference to Leland's efforts his efforts to curb hunger in Africa.

Before the congressman left the U.S. to visit Ethiopia, he and other members of the House Select Committee on Hunger took a

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# Faith in God sustains brother of American being held hostage

By Erin C. Walsh  
Catholic News Service

PHILADELPHIA — The brother of an American held hostage nearly three years in Lebanon says faith in God is helping him get through the ordeal.

Thomas Cicippio, whose brother, Joseph, was taken captive Sept. 12, 1986, said he is "very optimistic" that "it'll just be a matter of time and all the hostages will be freed."

Thomas Cicippio told *The Catholic Standard and Times*, Philadelphia's arch-

diocesan newspaper, "We have received many calls and cards from people all over the world telling us they are praying for us. We can't ask for anything more. The power of prayer works wonders, as we all know."

On Aug. 3, three hours before Joseph Cicippio's scheduled execution by his alleged captors, the Revolutionary Justice Organization, a Mass was celebrated at Holy Saviour Church in the Cicippios' home town of Norristown, Pa., for the hos-

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