



Demonstrators hold up signs during a Feb. 2 march through Cape Town, South Africa, celebrating the legalization of the African National Congress.

Catholic News Service

## South African bishops hail release of Nelson Mandela

PRETORIA, South Africa (CNS) — The bishops of South Africa said Feb. 12 that the release of anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela a day earlier was a key to racial peace in the nation.

The bishops also said they hoped Mandela's freedom, after 27 years in prison, will end a "particularly sad chapter" in the country's history.

The bishops have "long held that Mr. Mandela's release is vital for a negotiated and peaceful political settlement," said the statement issued by the southern African bishops' conference.

Although confined to prison for more than a quarter-century, Mandela, 71, had become the symbol of the black South African struggle against white-minority rule and the racial system of apartheid. He was released Saturday, Feb. 11.

"His release hopefully signals the end to a particularly sad chapter in South African history in which many lost their lives and countless others suffered detention, imprisonment and exile in their struggle for justice," the bishops said.

The bishops said they rejoiced that Mandela is free, "able once again to exercise his rights and undertake his responsibilities within his family and society."

"Along with many others, but in a special way nonetheless because of his leadership role, he has suffered imprisonment and vilification in his struggle to work for a South Africa in which each and every person would be respected and valued, regardless of his skin," the bishops said.

The bishops wished Mandela and his family "a joyous and lasting reunion" and assured him of the bishops' "prayers and support as he faces the many and daunting challenges expected of him as leader and statesman in the months and years ahead."

Soon after his release, Mandela, who had been sentenced to life imprisonment for treason in 1964, challenged the South

African government by backing guerrilla war against the apartheid system.

"We have no option," he said in a speech to 50,000 supporters in Cape Town. He urged the world to maintain punitive economic sanctions against the white-minority-led Pretoria government.

Mandela quoted from a statement he made at the end of the 1964 trial: "Our resort to the armed struggle in 1960 ... was a purely defensive action against the violence of apartheid."

He also demanded negotiations to end white power and give a political voice to the voteless black majority.

Mandela headed for his single-story house in Soweto, the black township of more than 2 million outside Johannesburg.

Crowds in Soweto Feb. 12 were singing a new freedom song with the chorus, "Mandela is coming, Mandela is coming."

## United Way announces \$36.5 million goal for '90

ROCHESTER — Officials of United Way of Greater Rochester announced Feb. 7 that their campaign goal for this year would be \$36.5 million, marking a \$2 million increase over last year's goal.

According to R. Carlos Carballada, general chairman of the 1990 United Way/Red Cross Campaign, the 1990 goal is the most ambitious one to be undertaken in the organization's 72-year history. The goal is expected to be approved by United Way's volunteer board of directors at its March 2 meeting.

Carballada announced a special objective which calls for all monies raised in excess of this year's campaign goal to be directed to support efforts to combat substance abuse in the Rochester area.

The 1990 United Way/Red Cross Campaign kicks off on March 28.

## Chief's son leads civil rights struggle

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (CNS) — Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, released Feb. 11 after 27 years in prison, went from chief's son to the symbol of the South African civil rights struggle.

He was born in a tribal village in the Cape Province on July 18, 1918, the son of a chief of the Xhosa tribe.

He was educated at Fort Hare, South Africa, earning an arts degree.

He went to Johannesburg, the country's gold-mining center, to study law while working as a security guard at a gold mine and then as an estate agent.

He married Evelyn Nomathamsanga, a nurse who helped finance his studies but disapproved strongly of his growing involvement in the African National

Congress, the nation's oldest anti-apartheid movement. The marriage eventually broke up.

In 1952 he was one of more than 200 suspects rounded up and put on trial for

treason. After a four-year trial, during which he met and married Nomzamo Winnie Madikizela, Mandela and a number of other black leaders were acquitted.

The African National Congress was banned in 1960, and Mandela became a fugitive before being betrayed and caught with other leaders in Rivonia, a white suburb of Johannesburg.

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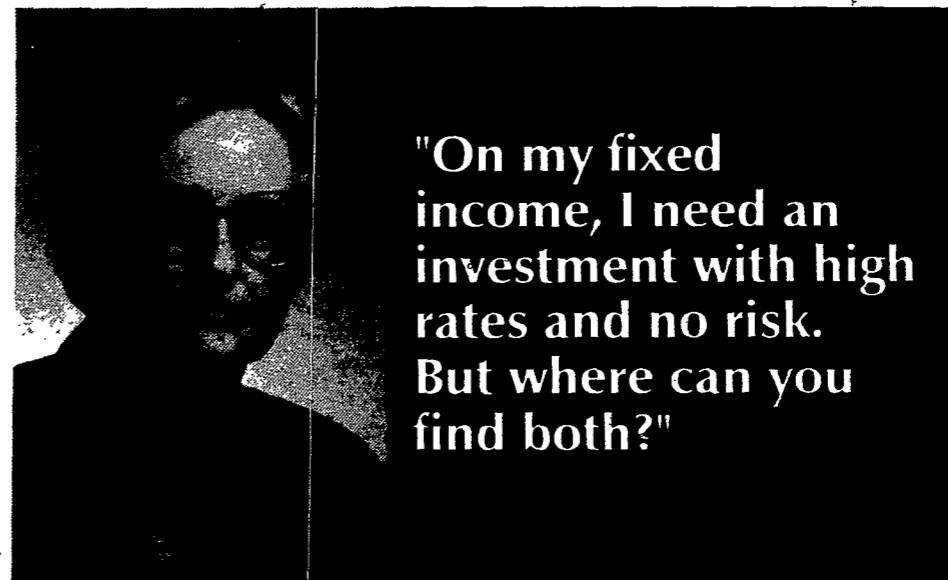
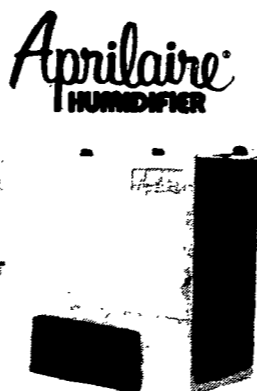
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