

Rochester native hopes to meet with Saddam

By Tracy Early
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — Rochester native Brother Eugene Casper, a member of the Maryknoll order, is part of an 18-member peace delegation that departed for Iraq Oct. 20 in hopes of meeting with President Saddam Hussein and other officials.

The delegation, which also included Bishop Michael H. Kenny of Juneau, Alaska, left from New York's Kennedy Airport Oct. 17 for Jordan and Iraq. The peace delegation comprised Muslims and Jews, as well as other Christians.

At a press conference in the airport chapel prior to departure, Bishop Kenny said the delegation wanted to let Iraqis see Americans opposed to war and to urge a negotiated solution to the conflict.

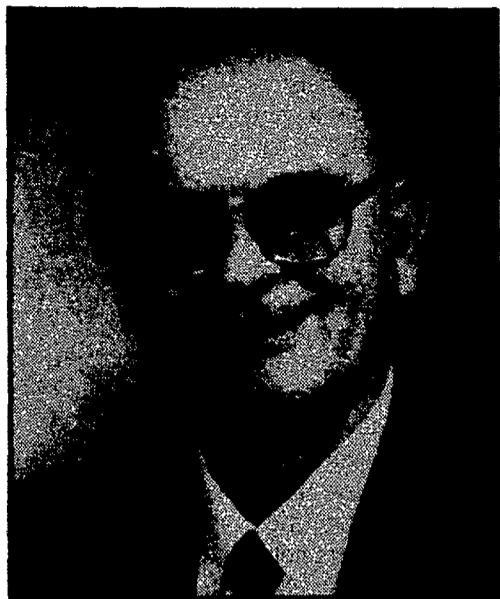
Representing Pax Christi U.S.A. on the trip, Bishop Kenny also said he hoped to meet and pray with Americans detained in Iraq and to celebrate Mass for Catholics.

The trip was sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a religiously based pacifist group with headquarters in Nyack, N.Y. The delegation flew to Amman, Jordan, from which it was scheduled to continue on to Baghdad, Iraq, and return to the United States Oct. 26.

According to David Grant, a staff member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, arrangements for the trip were made on short notice. Initial contacts with the Iraqi ambassador in New York were made just two weeks prior to departure. Once permission was granted, the organization contacted various church, peace and human-rights groups to invite participants.

Brother Casper was included in the delegation because he deals with Middle Eastern and African affairs as director of the Maryknoll order's Justice and Peace office, noted Marie Dennis Grosso, a member of the Maryknoll office's staff.

A graduate of Aquinas Institute and St. John Fisher College, Brother Casper served in Kenya from 1973 to 1976 and the Philippines from 1976 to 1989, when



Maryknoll Brother Eugene Casper left the United States for Iraq Oct. 20 as part of a peace delegation that hoped to meet with President Saddam Hussein and other officials.

he returned to the United States to become director of the Justice and Peace office in Washington, D.C.

Rochester resident Robert Wahl, Brother Casper's brother-in-law, speculated that the Maryknoll brother "jumped at" the opportunity to go to Iraq because in the past he has traveled to such troubled regions as El Salvador and Nicaragua.

"With his job now, certainly he's concerned with situations like Iraq," Wahl said.

C. Douglas Hostetter, the fellowship's executive secretary, said the delegation expected to meet in Jordan with government officials, Palestinians and Iraqi evacuees. In Iraq, the delegates hoped to meet with President Saddam Hussein, other government officials, Iraqi citizens and American hostages, he said.

He said the delegation was taking 1,000 pounds of vitamins and medicines, which it would turn over to the Red Crescent Societies of Jordan and Iraq for distribu-

tion.

Hostetter said the group also was carrying letters from family members of some American hostages and hoped that "all or some" of the hostages would be allowed to return with them. If not, he said, the delegation hoped at least to bring back some letters.

Officials of the fellowship said the trip had been approved by the Iraqi government, and that the delegation would be hosted there by the Iraqi Committee for Friendship, Peace and Solidarity.

Nevertheless, Brother Casper nearly was barred from entering Iraq when officials at Amann, Jordan, found an Israeli customs stamp on his passport. According to Grant, Brother Casper at first was told that he would not be allowed to proceed with the rest of the delegation, but finally was allowed to continue.

In conjunction with the trip, the fellowship issued a statement saying, "While we reject Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait, we also adamantly protest the human, social and material costs resulting from our nation's headlong rush to war."

Bishop Kenny said he did not envision any long-term solution unless Saddam Hussein agreed to withdraw from Kuwait. But he said dialogue over "the issues that brought him to Kuwait" could begin prior to his withdrawal.

Hostetter said President Bush had been invited to meet with the delegation upon its return to hear about what members had learned and "our concerns for a negotiated settlement to this conflict."

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Contains additional reporting by Courier staff writer Lee Strong.



Brother Casper, a graduate of Aquinas Institute and St. John Fisher College, served in the Philippines from 1976 to 1989.

Renowned doctor to speak on abortion

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Dr. Bernard Nathanson, an outspoken and controversial abortion opponent, will speak in Rochester Oct. 27 during a breakfast gathering at the Riverside Convention Center.

The founder of the National Abortion Rights Action League and former operator of a large New York City abortion clinic, Nathanson changed his views in the mid-1970s and began to deliver anti-abortion lectures, such as the one scheduled for Rochester.

"I have to appease my own conscience, and try to find some forgiveness for allowing the abortion monster out of the cage," Dr. Nathanson said last week in a telephone interview with the *Catholic*

Courier.

As part of his anti-abortion efforts, Dr. Nathanson has written two books — *Aborting America* and *The Abortion Mentality*. He also produced such controversial films as *Silent Scream* and *Eclipse of Reason*.

In *Silent Scream*, Nathanson asked a fellow doctor to attach an ultra-sound monitor to a pregnant woman during the abortion of the woman's 12-week-old fetus. Released in 1985, the film drew strong criticism from pro-choice advocates.

"The film is so graphic and so violent and so ultimately condemnatory in itself that those who advocate abortion had no choice to attack it in every way they could," Dr. Nathanson said.

Produced in 1987, *Eclipse of Reason* was filmed through a fetuscope — a long optical instrument — which was inserted into the womb of a woman to film the abortion of her approximately 19-week-old fetus.

Nathanson said he ultimately came to repudiate his former support of abortion as a result of ultra-sound technology, fetuscopes and other advances in medical technology that enable doctors to treat fetuses while they are still in the womb. "I think at some point that anyone who has an open mind becomes convinced of the unacceptability of abortion even with crude technologies," he said.

A gynecologist/obstetrician with a prac-
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