

War in gulf incites battle of words at home

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — War between Iraq and the U.S.-led allied forces provoked a variety of responses from local Catholics last week, ranging from words of support for President Bush's actions to statements of dissent regarding the nation's policy in the Persian Gulf.

Our Mother of Sorrows Parish, 5000 Mt. Read Blvd., welcomed approximately 1,200 people to an evening Mass for peace on Jan. 14. The Mass opened with the hymn "Be Not Afraid," and its homily consisted of a public "litany" of 289 service people whose names had been submitted by worshippers. According to Father David J. Faraone, parochial vicar, the reading of the names took 45 minutes, and the congregation concluded the evening by singing "America."

Two days later, the United States changed from a country anxiously awaiting war to a nation fully engaged in battle after the launch of allied air strikes against Iraq and Iraqi military positions in occupied Kuwait.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark released a statement Jan. 17, expressing great regret over the beginning of hostilities.

"I am saddened that the human family will once again experience the horror of war," the bishop's statement read in part. "It had been my hope that the crisis in the Persian Gulf could be solved by peaceful means. At this critical hour, I wish to offer my prayers for the women and men of our armed forces serving in the war zone and

for their families. I pray too for all of the innocent people for whom this conflict will mean severe hardship, even the loss of life."

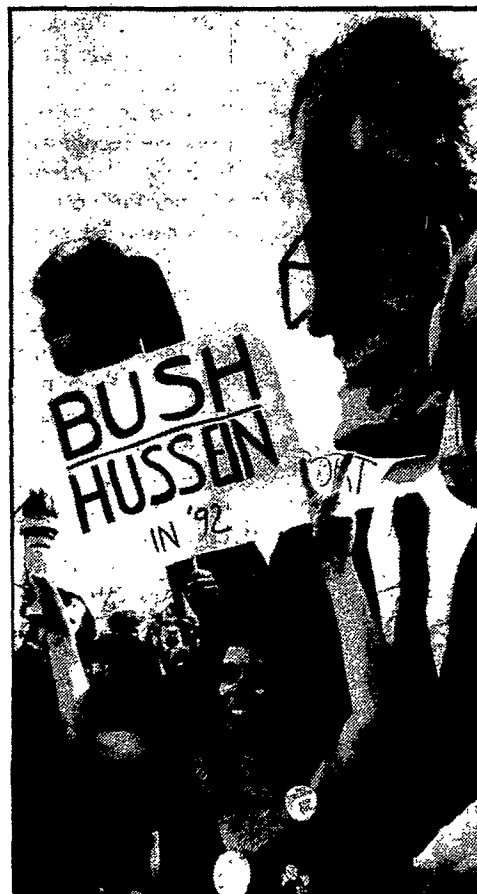
Prior to the outbreak of war, Bishop Clark — along with other Catholic priests and with the bishop and clerical leaders of Rochester's Episcopal diocese — had criticized the U.S. military buildup for potentially leading the nation into an "unjust war," defined generally as one in which the good accomplished by war is outweighed by the evil it causes.

Yet the sentiment expressed by the leaders of the two Rochester dioceses does not seem to be shared by much of the rest of the country. Opinion polls from several sources showed that 80-90 percent of all U.S. citizens supported the allied attack on Iraq.

Father Raymond G. Heisel, who resides at Our Mother of Sorrows, is among that number. A former Army chaplain who served during World War II and the Korean War, Father Heisel remarked that he was neither a "pacifist" nor a "hawk." Instead, he termed himself a supporter of the president.

"I'm in thorough concert with the president, and I want to support his program and the program of the military," Father Heisel said. "This (war) is it now, and I'm not going to undermine it."

The pastor emphasized that he was not attacking Bishop Clark for his criticism of U.S. policy, but simply was expressing his opinion that Bush has more knowledge of the situation at hand than do many of his



Rebecca S. Roth
A protester who identified herself as "Ms. Liberty" stands underneath a large President Bush puppet during the Jan. 19 peace march in Washington, D.C. About 15,000 people attended the anti-war rally.

critics.

"I think that the president knows more than I do, and I think he knows more than the bishop," said Father Heisel, who compared protests over the gulf war to "trying to stop a ball game in the middle of the game."

The game may have started, but a number of Catholics nevertheless want to put a halt to the action.

Carlos Nunez, a parishioner at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Church on Joseph Avenue, was among several area Catholics who participated in a national demonstration against the war in Washington, D.C. on Saturday, Jan. 19. Standing among about 400 other Rochester-area demonstrators in the Corpus Christi church hall the night before the demonstration, Nunez voiced his concerns about the war as demonstrators prepared to board eight buses chartered by the Rochester Peace and Justice Education Center.

"I'm just basically trying to express my opinion that what we have here now in the Middle East has nothing to do with any democratic value or any freedom of any kind," Nunez said. He argued that the allied forces were actually fighting to protect the interests of oil companies. "When they feel their profits are threatened, they don't mind asking someone else to do the dying to save their profits," he added.

The war in the gulf is draining dollars that should be spent on domestic problems, according to Eli Danzy Sr., a staff person at the House of Mercy, an outreach center operated by the Sisters of Mercy on Central Park.

"We have a lot of people dying, and homeless and hungry, and still we're spending over a million dollars a day on war," he said. Danzy, who is black, also remarked that the war will not benefit African-Americans, given that Bush recently vetoed a civil-rights bill.

"I don't feel like it's a black war," he said. "Our war is right here in the U.S., fighting to become equal and trying to make a living for ourselves."

When asked if their anti-war actions could be seen as undermining the U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf, those people interviewed by the *Catholic Courier* noted that they were supporting the troops by urging the president to bring them home.

While war continued to rage in the gulf region, Christians, Muslims and Jews met and prayed for peace on Sunday afternoon, Jan. 20, during an interfaith service at

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Agency to move in despite opposition

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — The 19th Ward Community Association's arrangement to lease space in its 504 Thurston Road building to Planned Parenthood of Rochester and the Genesee Valley is a "done deal," according to association volunteer Jon Wells.

That deal proceeds in spite of opposition from some community and association members, many who attended a Thursday evening, Jan. 17, meeting with supporters of the rental arrangement. The meeting took place at the Knights of Columbus of Rochester's building, 670 Thurston Road.

Greg Soehner, executive director of Planned Parenthood, echoed Wells' comments when contacted by the *Catholic Courier* for a response to the opponents' concerns. Pointing out that his agency researched the 19th Ward and attended several association meetings before negotiating a lease, Soehner left no doubt

that Planned Parenthood would eventually move into the building.

"We have every intention of opening an office on the west side (of the city), and we don't see this group's opposition as any reason not to," Soehner remarked.

Although invited to attend the Jan. 17 meeting, Soehner "declined amicably" according to Ken Maher, a leader of the opponents. Maher is also a parishioner at St. Peter and Paul Parish, 720 W. Main St. Maher said Soehner thought Planned Parenthood had already done its "homework" before leasing the building.

Prior to the Jan. 17 meeting, 21 pro-choice protesters briefly picketed outside, carrying signs bearing such slogans as, "We believe in parenthood planning," and "A fetus is not viable till 24 weeks: Stop the lies."

About 50 people attended the meeting, which was sponsored by the Knights' Right to Life Committee. Among those who at-

tended the meeting to voice opposition to Planned Parenthood's move into the building were Sister Eileen Kinnarney, chairwoman of the board of directors of St. Mary's Hospital, and Father Louis A. Sirriani, pastor of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish.

Maher read a petition asking the association to dissolve any potential lease with Planned Parenthood. The petition was signed by 22 people, including some local church leaders and representatives of three area health offices and the administration of St. Mary's Hospital.

Among its arguments against the leasing, the petition stated that Planned Parenthood "must be recognized as a highly controversial organization in our society which evokes polarized emotional reac-

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Campaign funds provide hope, means for fledgling cooperatives

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

When most people think of the word "power," images of military weaponry or loads of money may come to mind.

But when Kay Burnett thinks about power, images of bread and fruit and vegetables float through her head.

Burnett is the staff social worker at Calvary St. Andrew's Church, a combined Presbyterian/Episcopal congregation in Rochester's South Wedge neighborhood. She noted that her church has operated an emergency food cupboard since the mid 1960s, but in the last year, the staff and other community leaders decided to attack the problem of hunger from a different angle.

The question the group of concerned citizens asked of itself was this, Burnett said: "How we might use a grant ... to empower people to be able to use food more advantageously."

The Community Food Cooperative became the group's answer project of

the South Wedge Planning Committee and Calvary St. Andrew's Church, the cooperative recently received \$4,000 from the Catholic Family Center's Campaign for Human Development.

CHD grants are essentially designed to enable poor people to break out of poverty, rather than merely to alleviate poverty's effects in their lives. The Monroe and Livingston county CHD funds are drawn from an annual collection taken up at Catholic parishes in both counties. Committees in both counties submit names of grant nominees to the Catholic Family Center's board of directors, who give final approval on the grants.

Burnett said the co-op will use its grant to hire a part-time coordinator.

The fledgling co-op provides food at discount prices or no cost at all to members, depending on how much time they volunteer in obtaining, preparing, freezing and storing food. Much of the co-op's food is gleaned from Rochester-area farms,

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