

Catholics greet cease-fire with hope and joy

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Michael Martina, a parishioner at St. Mary's in Dansville, has Georgia on his mind — Fort Benning, Ga., that is.

His 19-year-old son, John, was stationed at that Army base before being called to duty in the Persian Gulf war as a private with the 197th Infantry Brigade.

Martina enthusiastically welcomed the cease-fire announced last week.

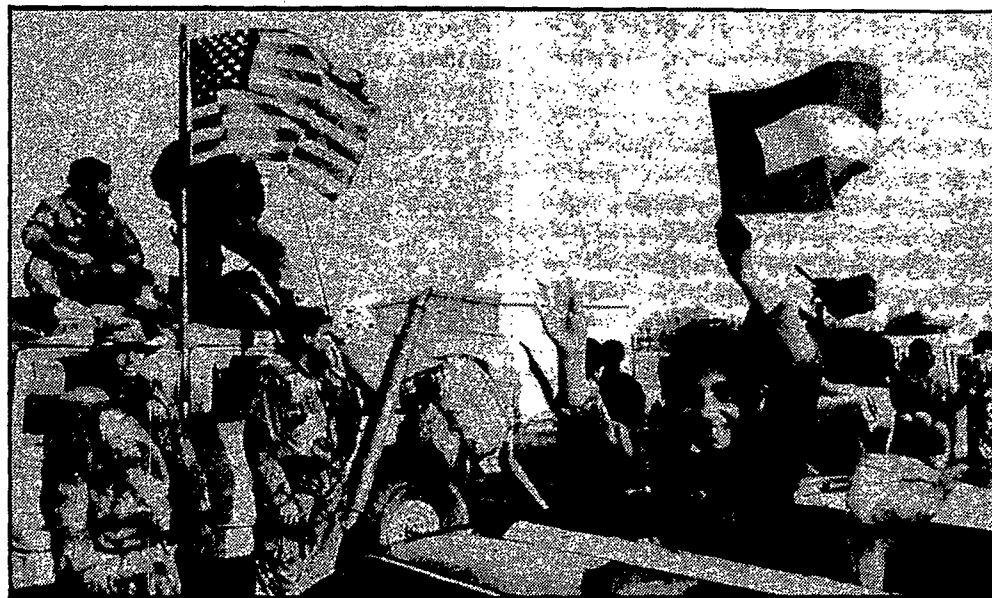
"It's the greatest thing since chocolate milk," Martina said. Even sweeter for the Dansville parishioner will be seeing his son as soon as John can return to the states, Martina noted.

"If he doesn't get home (to Rochester), I myself will go down to Fort Benning and throw a party for him and his buddies," Martina said, adding that the party would be a "well-deserved" tribute to the soldiers.

Martina's wife, Billie, cautioned against becoming too excited about the cease-fire until talks between Iraqi officials and allied representatives confirmed peace in the Persian Gulf region.

"I'm not letting myself be caught off-guard," she observed.

Despite her concerns about the permanence of the current peace, Billie Martina shared her husband's pride over her son's participation in the liberation of Iraqi-occupied Kuwait. She pointed out that John had written his family a few weeks



AP/Wide World Photos
A young Kuwaiti girl waves her nation's flag from the sun roof of a car as the vehicle passes a group of American Marines during a parade in Kuwait City Feb. 27. Thousands of Kuwaitis took to the streets of their capital to celebrate their liberation from Iraqi occupation.

ago, saying that his outfit was "moving rapidly westward" as part of a "secret mission."

After watching a televised briefing by U.S. Commander General H. Norman Schwartzkopf, Billie Martina later realized that the secret mission was probably part of an allied thrust into northwestern Kuwait.

"I felt nothing but pride," she said of her son's effort in the allied offensive.

Honoring the troops for their service is on the mind of many veterans of U.S. wars, according to Edward Kraft. The Monroe County Commander of the Catholic War Veterans said his group — in conjunction with other veterans' organizations — might present some type of Memorial Day tribute for soldiers who served in the gulf.

Kraft added, however, that such a tribute

would ideally take place when most of the troops are home — an unlikely prospect by Memorial Day, given the vast post-war operations the allies must undertake.

Among those conducting such operations will likely be the 25-year-old son of John and Mary Bond, parishioners at St. Mary of the Lake/St. Benedict in Watkins Glen.

John Bond said a letter from his son, Nicholas, a lance corporal and mechanic in the U.S. Marine Corps, had informed the family that Nicholas is driving a "wrecker" — a vehicle equipped to tow away military hardware — and will be helping to clean up war-ravaged Kuwait.

John Bond said he couldn't wait for his son's return to the states. "We're very pleased with the cease-fire," he said. "We're in hopes that he'll stop on his way back and see his mom and dad."

When the troops come back, Susan Stehling, a parishioner of St. Patrick's in Victor, wants to make sure they receive a warm welcome. The mother-in-law of Army Infantryman David Mistretta, Stehling is a local organizer of a group known as Military Families Support Network. The group was formed with the dual objective of supporting the troops while lobbying the government to bring them home.

Now that the guns have fallen silent in Kuwait, Stehling is voicing the hope that troops will receive educational opportunities, medical care and other benefits after their tours of duty in the Middle East.

She said the support network has gathered "64 pages" of names of individuals throughout New York who want to do something on behalf of the servicemen and women in the gulf region.

"Most of them had no one in the military," she said. "They wanted to help in any way they could."

Stehling, a vocal critic of the war and of President George Bush's policy in the Middle East, nonetheless praised those who served in Operation Desert Storm.

"They did accomplish a great thing for the Kuwaiti people," Stehling said of allied forces. "They did a magnificent job, and there's no doubt about it."

Yet Stehling criticized President Bush and his advisers for pursuing the war for such interests as "oil rights," and argued that war only creates more problems than it solves.

On the other hand, if presidents received awards for resolving crisis situations, Bush would probably receive a gold plaque from Father Raymond G. Heisel, priest-in-residence at Rochester's Our Mother of Sorrows Parish and a former Army chaplain.

"I'd like to think an early peace is an answer to not the (anti-war) protesters, but to our prayers," he said, alluding to comments he made at the outset of war. Those

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Workers to share health-policy costs

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Beginning July 1, 1991, all employees of the Diocese of Rochester will have to pay a portion of their health-insurance costs.

The 1991-92 recommended salary increase for all employees has been set at 5 percent. Priests will receive an additional increase of 8.3 percent to help compensate for a cost-of-living deficit that has accrued since 1976.

These provisions are contained in the diocesan Compensation Package for the 1991-92 Fiscal Year, which was prepared by the diocesan Salary and Benefits Committee. Approved by Bishop Matthew H. Clark and the Bishop's Stewardship Committee, the package was released Feb. 20,

1991.

The compensation package contains salary recommendations for all diocesan employees, and lists the benefits available to those employees.

Beginning July 1 of this year, all diocesan employees who work more than 20 hours per week and who began working for the diocese prior to July 1, 1989, will be required to pay 50 percent of all future increases in health-insurance premiums for single or dependent coverage.

Based on increases experienced in previous years, the next premium increase — expected in January, 1992 — is projected to be approximately 20 percent of current costs.

Employees hired after July 1, 1989, will continue to pay 50 percent of the difference

between single and dependent coverage.

"It was probably one of the hardest decisions that we as a committee had to make," Robert Mason, director of the diocesan Department of Personnel, said of the decision to introduce cost sharing for employees. "We had stayed away from it for as many years as we legitimately could. Unfortunately, most not-for-profit organizations have had to go into it reluctantly."

Mason said the rising cost of health insurance had become a burden for the diocese. In the 1987-88 fiscal year, the diocese paid \$2,045 for each family policy under Blue Cross/Blue Shield, he noted, whereas the projected cost for those policies in 1991-92 is \$3,528.

To help employees handle their share of health-insurance costs, the diocese is developing a program that will enable individuals to deduct their health-insurance costs from their income taxes, Mason said. Details about the program will be released in the near future, he added.

The 5-percent recommended salary increase for all employees is based on the Consumer Price Index and an assessment of what parishes and the diocese can af-

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Priest faces arraignment in Gates court

GATES — Father Thomas F. Corbett, parochial vicar at St. Theodore's Parish, was served with an appearance ticket Friday, March 1, in connection with charges of third-degree sexual abuse.

The misdemeanor charges stem from two recent incidents in which Father Corbett allegedly made sexual contact with a woman without her consent, according to Gates Chief of Police Thomas J. Roche.

The woman, whom Roche would describe only as being in her mid-30s, reported the alleged incidents to a social-service worker. Police were then notified

and served Father Corbett with the appearance ticket.

Father Corbett is scheduled to appear for arraignment at 6 p.m. March 13 in Gates Town Court.

According to Father George Norton, spokesman for the Diocese of Rochester, Father Corbett has retained the services of a lawyer and has been placed on administrative leave by the diocese.

A Rochester native, Father Corbett, 51, has served at St. Theodore's since Jan. 1, 1990.

CENACLE OFFERS SPECIAL EVENTS

March 21 Lenten Evening of Prayer

Evening will include conferences by Fr. John Walchurs, S.J. and time for personal reflection. Refreshments will be provided.

March 22-24 Palm Sunday Retreat Weekend

A perfect time to "be with" the Lord all through the Holy Week - and beyond! Insightful presentations, reflection, sharing as desired, private consultation. Conducted by Fr. John Walchurs, S.J.

March 28 Holy Thursday

Holy Thursday Eucharist followed by Festive Dinner. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. (Optional Overnight.)

March 29 Good Friday-Day of Prayer

Morning prayer, simple lunch. The Three Hours. Liturgy of the Day.

All events are open to men and women of all faiths

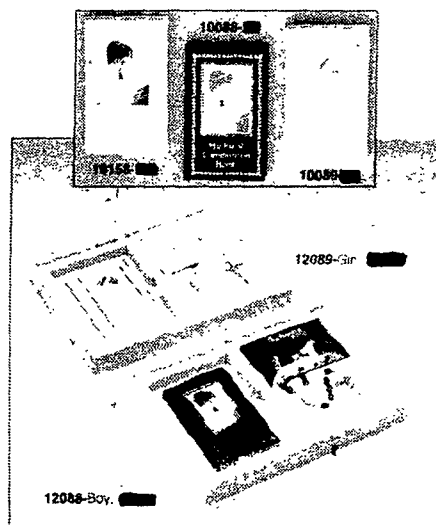
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