

War casualties may include morality debate

By Father Richard P. McBrien
Syndicated columnist

As I begin this week's column, a suspension of hostilities is in effect in the Persian Gulf and all signs point to a permanent cease-fire. The allied forces have successfully liberated Kuwait and have destroyed Iraq's offensive military capability.

But this happy outcome was not achieved without casualties. Although the number of allied killed and wounded was "remarkably light" — as one military commander put it — each death is an ultimate human tragedy for the victim and the heaviest of crosses to bear for the grieving loved one left behind.

The number of Iraqi soldiers killed or wounded may exceed 100,000. When one thinks of all the lives affected by those deaths, one begins to grasp the real enormity of that terrible statistic.

Add to these the numbers of innocent civilians killed or maimed in Kuwait, in Saudi Arabia, and in Israel — by torture and murder, by bombing, by Scud missile attacks, and by war-related accidents.

Add to these human tragedies the tremendous environmental damage done to the Persian Gulf by the massive and deliberate oil spill and to the atmosphere by the torching of hundreds of Kuwaiti oil wells. It will be years before an ecological balance can be restored.

And then there are the still incalculable costs — in the billions and billions of dollars — that will be required for the reconstruction of Iraq and Kuwait, for all those high-tech weapons that were deployed so effectively (some 91,000-plus sorties by the U.S. Air Force alone, dropping weapons each of which cost more than the houses we live in or dream about living in), and for the general material support of the 500,000 troops engaged in the Persian Gulf these past several months.

Add to all these casualties and costs something still more incalculable; namely, the long-term effects of the humiliation suffered by Iraq, the Palestinians and millions of other Arabs in the region. Will



ESSAYS IN THEOLOGY

there be reprisals in the form of terrorist attacks, assassinations or other forms of socially and politically disruptive activity?

And yet these are not the only casualties and costs of the war in the Persian Gulf. There is still one more: the practical end of all debate or even concern about the morality of the war.

Before the beginning of hostilities we had such a debate, and it was both vigorous and extensive, occurring primarily in both houses of Congress, but also on the editorial and op-ed pages of our major newspapers, on television and radio talk-show, in magazines, and in the religious community.

Among the participants in that debate were our own U.S. Catholic bishops, who submitted carefully crafted letters to the president of the United States and the secretary of state, in November and again in January just before the bombing of Baghdad.

The bishops had raised a question about proportionality. Would the liberation of Kuwait by military force be proportionate to the casualties and other costs of such a war, or was there another, more deliberate alternative; namely, the continued imposition of sanctions?

Once the authorization for war was passed by Congress and once President Bush ordered the bombing one day after the deadline imposed by the United Nations, the overwhelming majority of Americans closed ranks in support of the president and the troops in the Persian Gulf.

After the successful outcome of the war in the Persian Gulf, we may be tempted to use or threaten to use our new-found military power too quickly to resolve difficult international problems.

If indeed our success in the Persian Gulf has made it more difficult for us to engage in a serious, ongoing debate about the morality of war, then that may be this war's worst casualty of all.

Council begins to look for a way to arrest Jesus

By Cindy Bassett
Courier columnist

After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, some of the Pharisees who had witnessed the miracle set off immediately for Jerusalem. It was odd, but nowhere in their discussion was there any mention that a man who had been dead four days was now alive. Their minds were nearly consumed with other thoughts.

"If we don't do something, the people will seek to make Jesus a king," one of them said.

"And if the Romans hear about this, they will come and take away our temple and our power!" said another.

"That's ridiculous! Why should we all have to suffer because of some crazy prophet?" another one added.

When they arrived back in the city, these Pharisees went to see Caiaphas — the high priest that year. After he had listened to all of their complaints against Jesus, Caiaphas suggested: "I will convene the Sanhedrin and we will see if there are enough charges against Jesus to arrest him."

Seventy members of the Jewish Council gathered at the request of Caiaphas. As was the custom, everyone had an opportunity to speak about the subject in question. There didn't seem to be anyone present who hadn't heard about Jesus. And each one of the council members seemed to



THE BIBLE CORNER

have something to say about the problem.

"Just the other day, I saw Jesus drive out the moneychangers and the vendors from the temple area," a wealthy lawyer said. "These vendors contribute to our temple tax. Jesus is bad for business!"

"Bad for business or not, that certainly isn't something that we can arrest him for," another leading Pharisee added. "I think this Jesus suffers from delusions of grandeur. I heard him claim that he could rebuild our temple in three days! Our temple took more than 40 years to build!"

"Jesus is nothing more than the son of a poor carpenter," another said. "And yet, I heard him reading from the Scriptures as if he were some sort of authority."

"Authority? If Jesus is an authority on Scriptures, he certainly has no regard for our laws. He healed on the Sabbath."

Samuel, one of the chief priests, stood up and waited for silence as the question that was asked hung still unanswered in the air.

"Jesus is a threat because he claims to be God's son. He has promised all of those who follow him forgiveness of sins and

eternal life in his new kingdom."

"That's blasphemy! No one but God can forgive sins!"

"There are some who say that Jesus is the Messiah. After they heard about this supposed miracle with Lazarus, many more people will become his followers. I say that we get rid of both Jesus and this Lazarus, too!"

Caiaphas, who had remained silent through all of the discussion among the council members, finally stood and motioned for silence.

"Don't be such fools! Do you want to bring our whole nation down because of one man? It is better for Jesus to die for the people instead of destroying all that we have built for ourselves," Caiaphas said.

So from that day on, the Jewish leaders looked for an opportunity to arrest Jesus. It was nearly time for the annual Passover and many felt certain that Jesus and his followers would come to the temple in Jerusalem for the celebration.

An order was given that if Jesus was seen in the city, his sighting was to be reported at once. For his part, Caiaphas warned the priests and elders to be cautious.

"This Jesus is very popular with the people. If we aren't careful, there will be a riot if they see their leader taken prisoner," he said.

CoasterStone®

The First Coaster That Really Works!

CoasterStones are made from a special porous sandstone that actually soaks up moisture! They come in a wide assortment of colors and designs to match your decorated and gift giving plans.

Lamps • Lamp Shades • Accessories & Lamp Repair

The Shadee Lady
Northfield Common, Pittsford 385-7559
Tues.-Fri. 10-4, Sat. 10-2

Call 723-8760

Personalized to meet your needs:

- Companionship
- Senior sitting
- Shopping
- Meal Prep
- Respite Care
- Transportation
- Light Cleaning

SFS SERVICES for SENIORS

Reasonable Rates!
Fully Insured. Bonded

1100 Long Pond Rd. Suite 3

Egg Decorating

UKRAINIAN Egg Decorating Kits
Dyes, stands and design books

Also a nice selection of other Easter egg coloring kits, Holiday notions and much more.

CRAFT SERVICE
Rochester's only complete Easter Center!
337 UNIVERSITY AVE
325-5547

The Dream Deal of the Decade

UP TO

\$20,000

In value-added enhancements on your new Perna Home at no extra cost, for a limited time only!

The safest investment for your hard-earned dollars is a quality-built new home in the James Group community of your choice: Sunset Hill, Chestnut or Whispering Winds. Where else can you get a \$20,000 immediate return on your investment.

Your choice of value-added features could include: • fireplace • 14'x20' deck • exterior brick front accents • asphalt driveway • security system • built-in bookcases • dining room with hardwood floor • central air • ceramic bath floor • full kitchen appliance package and seeded lot.

And that's only the beginning of the deal. We're holding our base prices of all our portfolio homes at 1990 levels. Combine these prices with current interest rates and you'll see why we call this the Dream Deal of the Decade. The deal continues with our service and warranty program, they ensure that your new home investment is worry-free, guaranteed!

Stop by our model homes at Whispering Winds or Chestnut and see for yourself why our communities are consistently the first choice of informed new home investors. Model hours are: Mon-Thur. 2-7p.m., Sat. and Sun. 12-6p.m. For more information call 889-2010 or 889-4400.

• Enhancement package value is based on the base price of new home. See one of our sales representatives for all the details. Prior sales excluded. Offer expires March 31, 1991.

Represented by:
Village Park PROPERTIES

JAMES GROUP