

Pax Christi faults bishops' stance during war

ERIE, Pa. (CNS) — Pax Christi USA has questioned the application of the just war theory in the Persian Gulf and faulted the U.S. bishops for statements it said "focused on the just war position, and never legitimized the non-violent stance."

In a statement released March 22 from its headquarters in Erie, the Catholic peace group headed by Detroit Auxiliary Bishop Thomas J. Gumbleton asked whether the just war theory has been made obsolete by modern warfare.

Entitled "Aftermath of War: Unanswered Questions," the statement also asked whether Catholics received clear moral teaching from U.S. bishops; questioned the church's responsibility to Catholics in the military; and asked what it means to be the "universal" church in time of war.

Calling upon the church to "grapple" with these concerns, Pax Christi said the just war criteria — by which the church

seeks to clarify when military action is justified under Christian morality — "provided no clear moral guidance" during the gulf conflict.

The most intense and heaviest bombing in military history was described by U.S. officials as discriminate, the statement said. But civilian casualty figures by which that statement could be judged were not and are still not available, it noted.

It also questioned "the wanton killing of tens of thousands of retreating soldiers, the carpet bombing of unprotected soldiers, the morality of 100,000 bombing sorties in heavily populated areas." The massive destruction of Iraq and Kuwait and the chaos that remains in Iraq "proves that modern warfare has made the question of proportionality meaningless."

Casualty figures estimating as many as 150,000 Iraqi deaths compared to 200 for the United States raise the question "was this a war or a massacre?" the statement

said.

Pax Christi noted that prior to the Jan. 15 deadline set by the United Nations for Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait, the U.S. bishops' conference warned that war might not fulfill just war teachings and supported continued sanctions and diplomatic initiatives.

But once bombing of Iraq began, "the bishops' statements were vague and less certain. Public debate among U.S. Catholic bishops was a source of confusion" for U.S. policy-makers and the Catholic community, it said.

In addition, the statement said, "all official church statements focused on the just war position and never legitimized the non-violent stance" even though the bishops' 1983 pastoral letter on war and peace concluded that both just war and non-violence stances were credible Catholic positions.

While noting that Pax Christi does not expect bishops' conference statements to eliminate the possibility of personal conscience or responsibility or to encourage threats of excommunication against Catholic lawmakers who support the war, "what we do expect is clear moral guidance from church leadership."

The U.S. Catholic Conference March 26 had no immediate response to the points raised by Pax Christi.

Numerous individual bishops expressed opposition to war before bombing started Jan. 16 and, once the war began, many had questions or reservations about its morality.

In a Feb. 25 address in Washington, Archbishop John R. Roach of St. Paul-Minneapolis said most bishops had withheld "a definitive judgment" on the

morality of the war because of the "specific judgments required and limited information available" to make such determinations. The archbishop, chairman of the U.S. bishops' International Policy Committee, said the bishops' role was to "share our moral judgments and raise serious questions with both conviction and modesty" without giving "absolute" answers when that is impossible.

The Pax Christi statement also asked if Catholic chaplains offered moral guidance to soldiers about their rights to refuse orders to use unconventional weapons or to participate in indiscriminate killing. And it questioned whether dioceses offered adequate counseling to reservists and others with questions about participating in a war.

The statement also urged the United States to call for an international peace conference as suggested by Pope John Paul II to settle the varied conflicts of the Middle East and asked whether President Bush's energy policy would lead to more military conflict because of its emphasis on increased production rather than on conservation and renewable energy sources.

Pax Christi questioned how the United States could call for Iraq to pay reparations to Kuwait "when the U.S. itself is in violation of the World Court order to pay reparations to Nicaragua for the U.S.-funded contra war." The peace group also asked "if the U.S. has made reparations to Panama."

The statement also said "we fear that basic constitutional rights were eroded" because "censorship imposed on the media denied the people the right to judge the morality of the war."



ANGRY WORKERS — Steelworkers from the former East Germany whistle in protest during a March 25 demonstration in Berlin. The workers are asking for better working conditions and higher wages as negotiations continue.

Mother Teresa voices concern over scams exploiting her name

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Mother Teresa has asked U.S. bishops to warn people nationwide of several fundraising scams that are using the Nobel Peace Prize winner's name without her approval.

"Many people are giving generously for the poor thinking I have authorized such persons to collect money for us," Mother Teresa said in a letter sent to all U.S. bishops in late February. "I have not authorized anyone to raise funds or receive donations in my name."

Mother Teresa, founder of the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta, India, said in the letter that the so-called fundraisers sell pictures and statues of her and make people "believe that donations and proceeds from sales are given to me."

Fundraising efforts are prohibited in the order as well as among lay workers of the order, Mother Teresa said.

"Please help us to get this information to the people because they work hard and give generously for the poor and it is sad their gifts are not reaching the poor," she said.

Mother Teresa indicated in her letter that she had written U.S. bishops before about the problem, but she had continued to hear from people about the fundraising ploy.

Mother Teresa said people who wish to give something for the poor should make donations directly to the Missionaries of Charity in their area.

A nun at the order's motherhouse in the

Bronx section of New York City told Catholic News Service March 26 the order had no further comment about the incidents.

Contributing to this story were Ines Pinto Alicea in Washington and Teresa Coyle in St. Louis.

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Recovering from the storm

A message from Rochester Telephone

As Western New York continues to recover from the enormous damage inflicted by the ice storm of '91, the people at Rochester Telephone want to thank our customers for their patience and understanding.

It was the most destructive storm in our history. And we've been serving the Rochester area for more than 110 years.

As many as 60,000 customers lost telephone service, some for only a matter of days, others for much longer periods.

At the height of our restoration efforts, more than 700 workers were in the field replacing and repairing telephone lines, the largest work force we've ever assembled. About 400 of them were Rochester Telephone men and women — union employees represented by the Communications Workers of America and the Rochester Telephone Workers Association supplemented by management employees.

The rest were from other telephone companies throughout the Northeast who, in the finest traditions of our industry, volunteered to help us in a

moment of very real need.

Supported by hundreds of other Rochester Telephone employees, these crews worked 16 hours a day or more in our 2,300 square mile territory. In the process, they replaced or repaired more than 230 poles and 74,000 individual lines to homes and businesses, each one of which required a visit to the customer location.

Our crews will be in the field for many more weeks making permanent repairs to the facilities destroyed or damaged by the storm.

In the storm's aftermath, the communities we serve also face a huge task: replacing the thousands of trees felled or severely damaged. To help, we're pleased to announce that we will contribute \$55,000 to the reforestation efforts, \$50,000 of it to go to communities in our Rochester Telephone operating territory and \$5,000 for our Seneca-Gorham Telephone Co. territory in Ontario County.

Together, we can rebuild the environment that makes the Rochester area so unique.

