



# CATHOLIC COURIER

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## Title wave

McQuaid Jesuit edges Fairport for the Section 5 Class A boys' basketball crown, and Our Lady of Mercy prevails in double overtime over Greece Athena to win the Class A girls' title. Pages 10-11.

# Plight of the Refugee

## War, disasters creating flood of castaways

### World overflows with 'modern-day Josephs'



The Flight into Egypt

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff writer

In October 1992, officials from the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Travelers and the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, which coordinates Vatican relief efforts, released a document titled, "Refugees: A Challenge to Solidarity."

The document noted that refugees are a phenomena as old as Joseph's brothers being driven by famine into Egypt, and the people of Judah being carried off to exile in Babylon.

Even the Messiah tasted the plight of refugees when his parents took him to Egypt to escape Herod's wrath, the officials noted.

Matthew wrote in his account that the family fled soon after the Magi left and Joseph dreamed of an angel warning him:

"Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him. Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt."

Today's world is filled with millions of Josephs of every race and creed fleeing Herods going by the names of war, natural disasters, famine, and poverty. Like Joseph, these refugees seek a safe place for their families and themselves until, as Matthew wrote, some angel might appear and say:

"Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead."

Indeed, Jim Delaney, director of the Refugee Resettlement Program for Catholic Family Center, 25 Franklin St., Rochester, noted that — contrary to stereotypes of refugees as opportunists who flee their lands for the good life in another "Egypt" — most refugees would rather return to their homelands.

Delaney, who has interviewed refugees in Vietnam, Bangladesh, Laos, Cambodia, Sudan, Kenya, Thailand and Singapore, dismissed "redneck" fears of refugees "who seek to suck the bloodline of the country."

"There seems to be a general reluctance for people to leave on a permanent basis," he said, adding that "98 percent of the thousands I've

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# Iraqis arrive in Rochester bearing scars of rebellion

ROCHESTER — One man lifts his pant leg to show a calf shattered by an artillery shell fired during the war between Iran and Iraq in the 1980s.

Another man tells of how he had to leave his wife behind in Iraq.

Still another rolls his eyes as he reveals scars on his forehead and leg, scars received when he was beaten in an Iraqi refugee camp in Saudi Arabia.

"Saddam crazy," Ahmed Al-Ubede said. His compatriots shook their heads in agreement over the comment about the ruthless ruler they rebelled against in Iraq following Saddam's failure to annex Kuwait in 1990-91.

"These men are *persona non grata* in Iraq," added Siddiq Abdul-Hakim, a volunteer at the Islamic Center, 727 Westfall Road. "They cannot go back to Iraq."

Speaking Arabic, the refugees told their horror stories through the one man who speaks English best, Abbas Al-Nijairis. Further interpretation was provided by Abdul-Hakim and Muhammad Shafiq, the center's director.



Iraqi refugee Ahmed Ayadh (center) speaks through an interpreter while being interviewed by a Rochester TV station at the Greater Rochester International Airport March 3.

Sponsored by Catholic Family Center's Refugee Resettlement Program, the 10 Iraqi men arrived in Rochester on Wednesday, March 3.

A four-person committee comprising volunteers from the Islamic community is working with the refugees, Shafiq said. Currently, nine of the men live in a city apartment, while one of them is

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