

War, disasters have created flood of refugees

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interviewed would rather go home."

Unfortunately, today's Herods seeking to end refugees' lives — or who are, at best, indifferent to their fate — are far from dead and seem only to be multiplying in today's world, according to Vatican officials.

"Today the already high number of refugees — about 17 million — who fall under the strict definition given by international law is doubled by the number of displaced persons who do not leave their own countries and are thus not legally protected," the officials commented.

Furthermore, they wrote: "There is also a constant rise in the number of those leaving their countries in order to flee from extreme and almost crushing poverty."

The Vatican document on refugees was scheduled to be the subject of an international round table at the United Nations in New York City March 9.

"The exchange of views and experiences is meant to stimulate international solidarity and contribute to ever closer collaboration," said Archbishop Renato R. Martino, Vatican nuncio to the United Nations, in a letter inviting agencies and individuals concerned with refugee questions.

The document calls for improved international agreements on refugee policy and individual action to ensure that people forced to flee their homes find safety and acceptance in new lands.

Participants will include top U.N. officials and Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, president of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, and Archbishop Giovanni Cheli, president of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant Peoples.

A large number of other religious and government officials, representatives of non-governmental organizations, members of local groups aiding refugees and people with personal experience as refugees will also be involved.

Dith Pran, the Cambodian refugee whose story was told in the movie, *The Killing Fields*, is among the panelists who will respond to presentations by Cardinal Etchegaray and Archbishop Cheli.

Representatives of societies especially affected by refugee situations, including Archbishop Francois Gayot of Cap-Haitien, Haiti, will be involved.

The round table is being sponsored by the Vatican's Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations and the Path to Peace Foundation, an agency established by Archbishop Martino to assist with special projects.

Interviewed by Catholic News Service Feb. 15, Archbishop Martino said the round table would be the first such conference focusing on the refugees document.

"When the document was issued, I thought it was imperative to discuss the situation of refugees further because instead of getting better it is worsening," he said. "If two or three years ago there were 14-15 million refugees in the world, now the number is estimated at 18 million."

The round table will be concerned not only with meeting refugees' needs but also with addressing conditions that produce refugees, he said.

It was scheduled to continue March 10 with a program just for Catholics to help those working with refugees to coordinate efforts to be more effective, said Archbishop Martino.

U.S. Catholics have worked with refugees extensively through the Office of Migration and Refugee Services of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The office was established in 1968 to consolidate the NCCB's efforts to resettle immigrants and refugees, according to information from the conference in Washington, D.C.

In 1991 alone, the office administered the resettlement of 31,920 refugees in this country, in addition to helping out with 20,560 "unfunded cases," or people who were admitted with immigrant or parole visas from refugee-like situations. Indeed, between 40 and 50 percent of all refugees in the United States are resettled by Catholic Church offices, Delaney reported.

Those efforts would be impossible without a network of diocesan offices and parishes to aid in resettlement. Delaney works for just such an office, which, he said, has aided in the resettlement of 2,000 refugees in the diocese since 1982.

Before becoming proud of the church's efforts, however, Catholics in the Rochester diocese should note that they have carried little of the burden of refugee resettlement for the last four years, Delaney explained.

Up until 1988, about 30 diocesan parishes had participated at least once in refugee resettlement, he said. Since then, for reasons he is at a loss to understand, most parishes have lost interest in refugee resettlement.

"I know some parishes have had unhappy experiences with refugees," he recalled, adding that Catholics may also be caught up in a general indifference to refugees because of economic troubles at home.

He added that the same diocesan parishes volunteer services again and again, while the majority sit on the

sidelines.

"If 12 parishes a month came through, we'd be sitting pretty," he said. But currently, only four diocesan parishes are helping his office resettle refugees. Delaney now relies mostly on community-based networks of non-Christian and Protestant volunteers, he said.

"If it were not for the Unitarians, I would be dead," he said.

What Delaney says he needs are volunteers to spend up to eight hours a week for two to six months helping refugees adjust to American life. Volunteers can perform a number of tasks, ranging from meeting refugees at the airport to arranging for them to learn English.

"It's not mothering, it's not foster care," Delaney said. "It's getting them on the course to early self-sufficiency and employment."

EDITORS' NOTE: This article includes Catholic News Service reports. To learn about refugee resettlement, call 716/262-7082.

Iraqis

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staying at the center, Abdul-Hakim added. A second apartment should be available for them by March 15, he said.

Eight of the refugees served in the Iraqi military and two were teachers in their homeland. But Saddam's invasion of Kuwait turned the men against their own country's armed forces.

"We don't agree with Saddam inside Kuwait," Al-Nijairis said. "We carried weapons and fought against Iraqi army in the revolution after the Gulf War."

By March of 1991, most of the men had become refugees and lived in a Saudi Arabian camp about 15 ki-

lometers from the Iraqi border, they said.

Saudi Arabia was not much better than Iraq, the men commented, noting their companion's mistreatment at the hands of the Saudis. About 25,000 Iraqis lived in the camp, Al-Nijairis estimated.

"We left more friends in Saudi Arabia," he said. "We need sponsors."

For now, the refugees are attempting to adjust to life in the United States. They will begin attending English classes next week, Abdul-Hakim said. Although he has helped resettle refugees before, the Islamic Center's involvement is a first, Shafiq said.

"We knew the refugees were coming and decided to help because of humanitarianism," he concluded.

Obituary

John Alexin, longtime volunteer

HORNELL — John "Yank" Alexin, an active member of area civic organizations, died Jan. 8, 1993, at St. James Mercy Hospital at the age of 76.

Mr. Alexin was employed for 25 years by the former Erie Railroad. He also worked at Hornell Wholesale Grocery and Riverside Lunch as well as the New York State Department of Transportation.

A parishioner at St. Ann's Church, 31 Erie Ave., Mr. Alexin served as an usher. He also belonged to the Knights of Columbus, Loyal Order of the Moose and Hornell Association.

Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated Jan. 11, 1993, at St. Ann's

Church, with interment at St. Mary's Cemetery in Fremont.

Mr. Alexin is survived by his wife, Jean; two daughters, Teresa Pulkowsky and Jean Conklin; son, John; two sisters, Margaret Henry and Mary Alexin; brother, Nick; eight grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews. In addition, Mr. Alexin is survived by a sister-in-law, Sister Mary Antoinette Riccardo, RSM, who resides at the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse in Rochester.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Heart Association, St. Ann's School or to a charity of choice.

Sister Dolorita Kelly, 86; native of Auburn

TECHNY, ILL. — Auburn native Sister Dolorita Kelly, a Holy Spirit Missionary Sister, died at the Convent of the Holy Spirit in Techny Jan. 26, 1993. She was 86.

Sister Dolorita attended St. Mary's School in Auburn and went on for her high-school education at Nazareth Academy in Rochester. She joined the Holy Spirit order in 1925, and pronounced her vows in 1928.

Sister Dolorita completed her undergraduate work in nursing at Loyola University in Chicago. From 1935 to 1951 she was operating-room supervisor at St. Mary's Hospital in

Watertown, Wis. She also served at St. Therese Hospital in Waukegan, Ill.; St. Ann's Home in Techny; Holy Spirit Hospital in Camp Hill, Pa.; and Noneset Geriatric Center in Dorchester, Mass.

After suffering a stroke in 1984, Sister Dolorita returned to the Convent of the Holy Spirit, where she resided until her death.

Sister Dolorita is survived by her sister, Miss Miriam Kelly, of Syracuse.

Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated Jan. 29, 1993, with interment at St. Mary Cemetery in Techny.

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