

Misery in Balkans continues

Leaders see little hope

WASHINGTON (CNS) — As prospects for ending the conflict in the Balkans looked grimmer, those urging peace in the region looked where they could for a glimmer of hope.

Catholic leaders recently in the war-torn Balkan states confirmed for themselves the situation's severity, yet continued to do all within their power to keep at bay a seemingly relentless slide toward still more war and destruction.

Pope John Paul II told 40 Bosnian war refugees in northern Italy July 11 he was praying that peace and justice would soon come to their "martyred homeland."

"Believers and people of good will do not stop trusting in God and asking for peace, even when the human possibilities are weak," he said after celebrating Mass in the resort town of Santa Stefano di Cadore.

The new apostolic nuncio to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Archbishop Francesco Monterisi, made a quick trip to ethnic strongholds in the tripartite nation in early July. First, he celebrated Mass in the Sarajevo cathedral July 4, a day of intense Serbian bombardment of the besieged Bosnian capital.

On July 6, the archbishop traveled to Mostar, where he celebrated Mass in the cathedral in the midst of fierce fighting between Croatian and Muslim forces in and around the city. He was later expected to visit the hard-pressed Catholic community in the Bosnian Serb stronghold of Banja Luka.

"We are at a decisive moment. Either a solution is to be found quickly or else the war will continue for who knows how long," Archbishop Monterisi said after he returned to Italy.

Also in the Balkans over a two-week span were Catholic Relief Services board chairman Bishop James A. Griffin of Columbus, Ohio, and CRS' Eurasia senior regional director, David Holdridge.

"We are trying to prepare for what might happen — an expansion of refugees and hostilities down here," said Bishop Griffin July 7 in Skopje, Macedonia. He and Holdridge also visited Croatia, Bosnia and the Yugoslavian province of Kosovo.

"Everyone is Kosovo is very uncertain," Bishop Griffin said.

"There is not any optimism in Kosovo that things are going to get better. We hope nothing happens, but we are preparing ourselves," he said. "We want to pre-position food and medical supplies in case something happens."

Holdridge, at a July 9 press conference in Washington, took an even stronger stand, advocating for greater interventionist measures to ensure "a viable Bosnia," while ripping the United Nations' Balkans effort.

"There's a whole lot of sitting around and drinking coffee and moaning about a situation that is 'too complicated,'" Holdridge said of the U.N. effort.

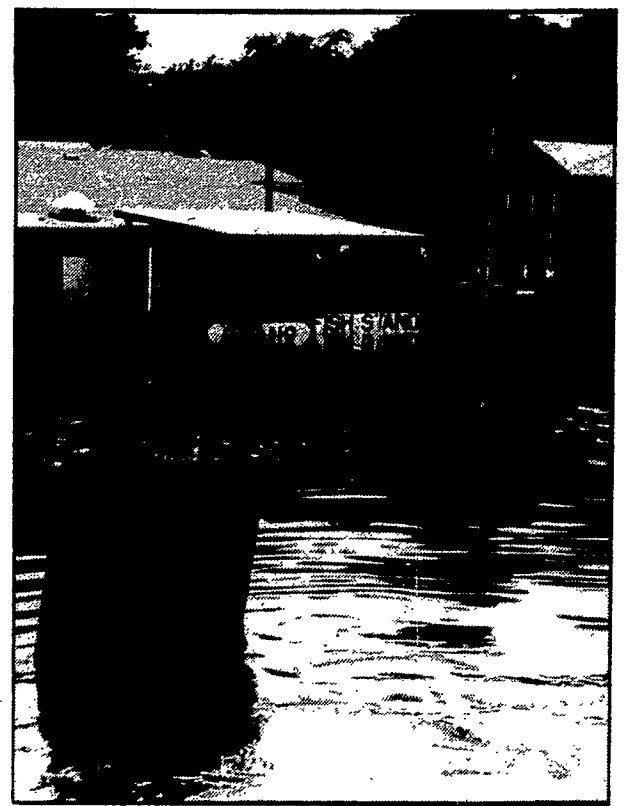
He said his and Bishop Griffin's efforts to see Archbishop Vinko Puljic of Sarajevo, as well as a side trip to Medjugorje, where alleged Marian apparitions were first reported in the early 1980s, failed because of violence reported in those areas.

"I never thought I could compare Beirut favorably to anyplace," Holdridge said of Sarajevo.

"I think, as have some editorial writers, it is in our best interest to intervene. Secure Bosnia by any means necessary," he said, adding he was departing from CRS policy on the subject.

Holdridge also backed "strengthening the trip-
Continued on page 5

Midwest reeling



AP/Wide World Photos

Flooding continues

Flood waters from the Mississippi River cover Main street in Grafton, Ill. Residents are seeking high ground to avoid flood waters from the Illinois and Mississippi rivers.

Auschwitz nuns vacate, rent convent to another group

By Jonathan Luxmoore
Catholic News Service

WARSAW, Poland — The last Carmelite sisters have vacated the Auschwitz convent that drew worldwide Jewish protest, but their superior has stirred up another controversy by renting the building to a Polish nationalist group.

Father Marek Glownia, director of the interfaith center built near the former Nazi death camp as part of a Catholic-Jewish accord drawn up to settle the controversy, said he had protested the Carmelite mother superior's decision to rent the building to the Polish War Victims Association. Father Glownia said her decision was

"completely wrong" and that it was made without notifying local church authorities.

He described the members of the association as mostly elderly people with an "extreme nationalist character."

The controversial convent, situated just outside the Auschwitz fence, became the focus of international protest by Jewish groups. They said the convent — and a fundraising campaign supporting it — violated the special meaning of the site as a memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

The last of the sisters left the building, which is owned by the local town government, in early July, years after the Catholic-Jewish agreement called for their move.

Father Glownia said six of the 14 sisters had moved into the new convent at the center. He said that the others might have returned to their motherhouse in Poznan, Poland, or to Carmelite convents in Krakow and Kielce.

The interfaith center's convent remains unfinished because of a shortage of funds, but the chapel and living section are fully functioning, the priest told Catholic News Service.

The Polish newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* reported that the Carmelite superior had given the war victims association a 30-year lease on the building and its surrounding garden at a rent of about \$350 annually. The mother superior and the association signed an agreement to that effect shortly before

the Carmelites' own rent arrangements were terminated by the town council, the newspaper reported.

Father Glownia said the mother superior had not announced the decision in advance or made any effort to notify local church officials.

He said the association's chairman was a former functionary of Poland's secret police who had been released from prison in 1990. The man had been held for suspected involvement in a communist-era corruption scandal, Father Glownia said.

"On the one side, the so-called 'convent conflict' is over," he said. "But the head sister has done something which, in my opinion, she had no right to do. I don't know what she was motivated by when she rented the building to the association. But the decision is particularly regrettable given that this is a small political organization composed mostly of elderly people with an extreme nationalist character."

Douglas C. Meeson "Our Family Serving Your Family For Over 65 Years" Robert E. Vay

Vay-Schleich & Meeson
Funeral Home, Inc.

2692 Dewey Avenue 663-2100 1075 Long Pond Road

FUNERAL DIRECTORS OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

The funeral Directors listed herein offer pre-need and at-need services and counseling in accordance with the Catholic faith.

<p>IRONDEQUOIT</p> <p>Schauman-Sulewski Funeral Home Inc. Edwin Sulewski 2100 St. Paul Street Rochester, N.Y. 14621 (716) 342-3400</p>	<p>Michael R. Yackiw Funeral Home 1270 Norton Street Rochester, N.Y. 14621 (716) 544-5000</p>	<p>ELMIRA</p> <p>HOLLY-KECK & BAKER, INC. James A. Baker, Sr., V.P. 640 W. Gray St., Elmira (607) 732-5273</p>	<p>GATES</p> <p>DiPonzio Funeral Home, Inc. (Across from St. Theodore's Church) 219 Spencerport Road Rochester, N.Y. 14606 429-6700</p>
<p>MONUMENTS</p> <p>HART MONUMENT CO. 2301 Dewey Avenue Opposite Holy Sepulchre Cemetery Since 1856 865-6746</p>	<p>ROCHESTER</p> <p>Crawford Funeral Home, Inc. "Our Family Serving Your Family" Located at 495 N. Winton Rd. (Between Atlantic & Humboldt) (716) 482-0400</p>	<p>Lucey Funeral Home, Inc. 301 W. Main St. Victor, N.Y. 924-5730 2309 Culver Rd. 342-0470 Michael W. Lucey Lic. Mgr.</p>	

ARNDT
FUNERAL HOME
Family Owned & Operated

RONALD JOHN ARNDT
ROBERT J. ARNDT
Funeral Directors
225-6350
1118 Long Pond Road
(South of Maiden Lane)