



# Catholic Courier

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

VOL. 106 NO. 22

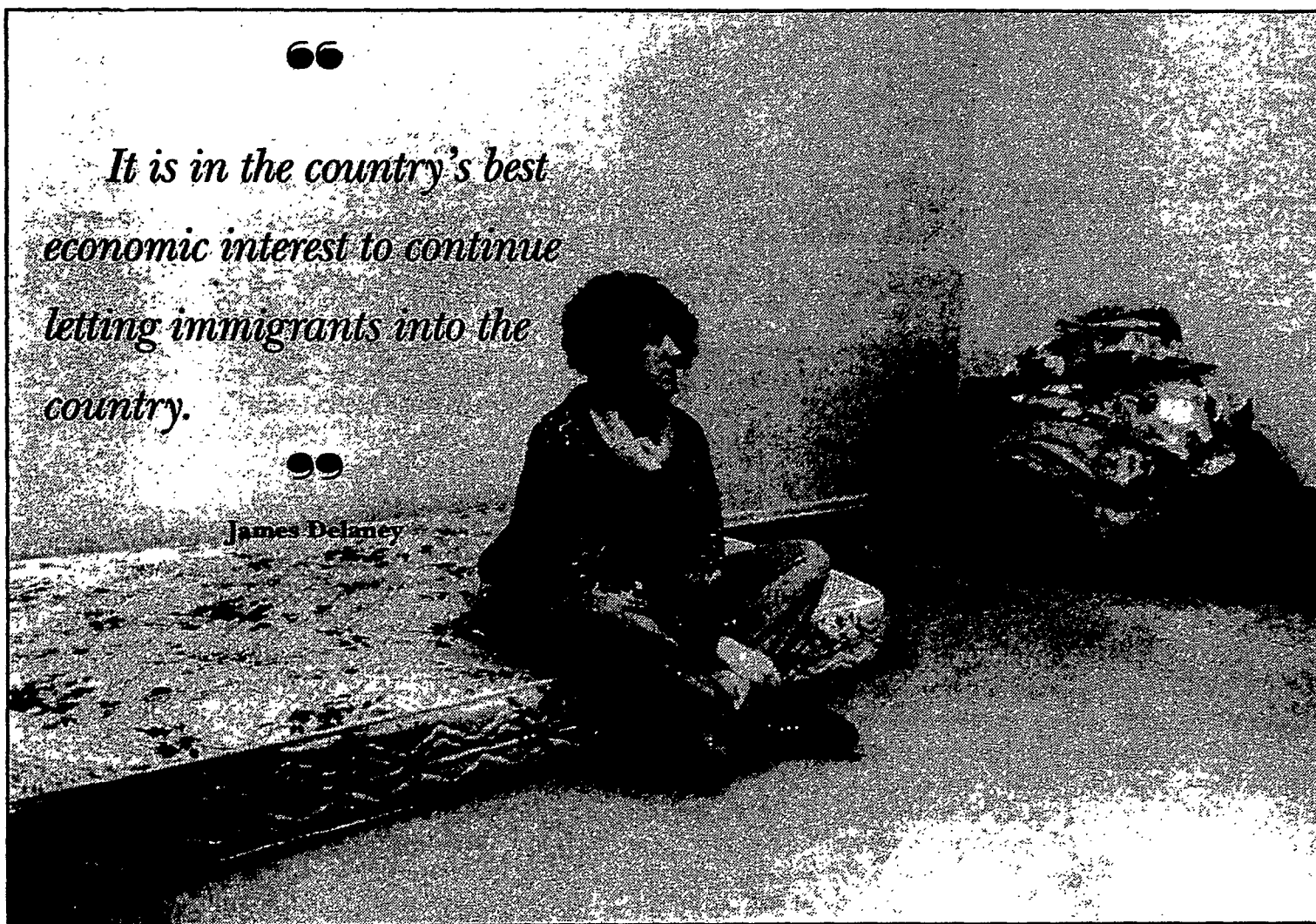
THURSDAY, March 9, 1995

75¢

20 PAGES

“  
It is in the country's best  
economic interest to continue  
letting immigrants into the  
country.”

James Delaney



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer

Bosnian refugee Sasa Stanic rests for a moment as she takes in her new surroundings. Sasa and her husband, Zeljko, arrived in Rochester March 1 from Bosnia through the resettlement efforts of the Catholic Family Center and the League of Muslim Women.

## Diocese continues role as key center for offering refugee resettlement aid

By Lee Strong  
Senior staff writer

James Delaney has first-hand experience of the current wave of anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States.

This year, Delaney — Resettlement Program manager for the Catholic Family Center — will aid in the resettlement of some 100 refugees.

In contrast, Delaney was involved with the resettlement of 181 refugees in 1994.

“The Proposition 187 mindset has translated into lower quotas,” Delaney said, referring to the 1994 California proposition that denies government benefits to illegal aliens.

Thus in 1994, the national quota for refugees was 120,000, Delaney said, while this year it is 108,000. And next year, he estimated, the figure could drop below 100,000.

Around the country, those refugees will be settled with assistance from approximately 120 offices like that of the Catholic Family Center. Through these programs, refugees receive help with school enrollment, job training, language and support programs.

But, with the declining quotas, Delaney pointed out, has come decreased government funding. Consequently, some of the resettlement offices will be forced to close.

Delaney's office — which was recognized by the U.S. Catholic Conference last year as a model volunteer resettlement program — is not in danger of closing due to budget cuts. But it is experiencing an a different kind of “cut.”

When Delaney began working with the office in 1979, the bulk of the volunteer support came from Catholic individuals and parishes. By 1985, Delaney observed, that support “just dried up. It was no longer trendy.”

Thus in spite of repeated appeals from Bishop Matthew H.



Interpreter Lenka Horwath (right) greets Zeljko Stanic at the Rochester Community Airport March 1.

Clark — including a Feb. 8, 1995, letter to pastors and parish administrators asking for help in efforts to resettle refugees — Catholic involvement has dropped off sharply. Delaney estimated that only 20 percent of the volunteers are Catholic.

“I can't even remember the last parish that was involved,” Delaney observed.

In the face of decreasing volunteer effort among Catholics, Delaney sought aid from non-Catholics. He amassed a pool of some 50 volunteers, organizing them into five teams.

Meanwhile, his office began to work cooperatively with other groups and organizations. Among those groups is the Islamic Center of Rochester, which has worked with CFC on the resettlement of Iraqi and

Bosnian refugees.

The most recent instance of this cooperation was the arrival March 1 of Zeljko and Sasa Stanic, a Bosnian couple being sponsored by the League of Muslim Women — even though neither of them is Moslem.

Delaney acknowledged that without the non-Catholic volunteers and these interfaith efforts, his program would have collapsed. “If it weren't for these people, I wouldn't be collecting a paycheck,” he quipped.

The Stanics are also emblematic of a change in the nature of the refugees.

In the early 1980s, the majority of the refugees were Vietnamese and Amerasians — the children of Vietnamese women and American servicemen. The resettlement of these people, many of whom had suffered years of discrimination and deprivation, was widely popular.

But while Amerasians and Vietnamese still represent the largest number of refugees coming in — comprising 123 of

Continued on page 18

Church officials  
tackle anti-  
immigrant hostility  
in laws and  
Catholics' attitudes

## Conflict tied to Prop. 187

By Patricia Zapor  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — California's Proposition 187 may be held up in court for years, but its ideals and legislation modeled after it loom in the near future for other states, according to panelists at a social-ministry conference.

“Proposition 187 becomes in conversation a mythical creature,” said Frank Sharry, executive director of the National Immigration Forum. The law, which would prohibit illegal immigrants from receiving such tax-supported benefits as education and medical care, is the answer to some Americans' frustrations about unemployment and other social problems.

For others, Proposition 187 is a frightening specter, making children illegal, keeping people from getting medical care and turning teachers, police and medical workers into agents of the immigration authorities, according to Sharry and participants in the conference.

Sharry was one of four panelists in a workshop on immigration policy during the Feb. 26-March 1 annual meeting of Catholic social-ministry organizations. Representatives of the Diocese of Rochester were among those attending the Washington meeting.

The gathering — which had as its theme, “Catholic Social Ministry: Committed to the Common Good” — also included workshops and discussions on such topics as welfare, peace, grass-roots organizing, the politics of values and human rights.

The conference also focused on two documents issued by the U.S. bishops: “Confronting a Culture of Violence: A Catholic Framework for Action,” released in November, 1994, and “Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on the Social Mission of the Parish,” a 1993 statement about making parishes communities of prayer and action.

During the Proposition 187 workshop, participants were warned that a handful of states had put on the ballot for their next general elections measures modeled on the law California voters approved in November. In other states, legislatures are warily watching for spillover problems caused by immigrants leaving California, panelists said.

And although enforcement of most of the California law is blocked by court order, immigrants across the country who misunderstand the law are acting as if it applied to them, said Ariana Quinones, associate director of the

Continued on page 18