

DIOCESAN NEWS

Adviser says Catholics can aid Congo people

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

U.S. Catholics can help fellow Catholics and others in such African nations as the Democratic Republic of Congo — formerly Zaire — by simply paying attention to them, according to Kevin James Lee, policy adviser on African affairs for the United States Catholic Conference.

Lee spoke to the *Catholic Courier* in a telephone interview June 19 from Elmira Heights. The USCC official was in Elmira to address a dinner at Granny's Restaurant. His visit was sponsored by Catholic Charities of the Southern Tier.

At the dinner, 23 people were honored for 10 or more years of social ministry work in their Southern Tier parishes, according to Kathy Dubel, justice and peace director for CCST.

In the interview, Lee said U.S. Catholics should ask the U.S. government to pressure Laurent Kabila, the rebel leader who now rules the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to protect human rights and eventually hold free elections.

"Make sure that the (U.S.) Congress people are aware that you are aware of what's happened," Lee said.

What happened is that Kabila named himself president of the Democratic Republic of Congo — a nation with a Catholic majority — at the end of May, following a seven-month civil war that drove Zaire's longtime dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko, from power.

Kabila's army included a mix of recruits from Rwanda, Angola and Tanzania, Zairian army deserters, and residents of southern and eastern Zaire who had joined Kabila early in his campaign to overthrow the government.

Both sides reportedly committed atrocities during the fighting. Kabila's army has been accused by both native and international observers of deliberately killing a

number of Hutu refugees living in the country who had fled neighboring strife-torn Rwanda in 1994. However, Lee said attacks against refugees have stopped for the most part.

The rebels, mainly ethnic Tutsis, launched a military campaign in October after government attempts to force Tutsis, centuries-long residents of Zaire, out of the country. Now that Kabila has won, African observers wonder what path the victorious leader will take in ruling the former Zaire, Lee noted.

"He is the better alternative to Mobutu, but he has no public track record," Lee said of Kabila.

Lee pointed out that Archbishop Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya of Kisangani, Democratic Republic of Congo, has called on the international community to send a multinational force to smooth the former Zaire's transition to a democracy. The archbishop headed a commission under the country's former government that was to oversee a planned transition to democracy earlier this year. However, elections planned for February were scuttled by fighting.

Lee said that although Kabila has made statements sympathetic to the archbishop's call for an internationally monitored transition to democracy, Kabila is wary of the internationally known archbishop.

"Because of (the archbishop's) involvement with the commission, Kabila feels he cannot trust him," Lee said.

Kabila's army was backed by such regional powers as Uganda and Rwanda, and his victory was welcomed by the United States, Lee said. He noted that Western powers like France and the United States have long been interested in the former Zaire, a Belgian colony until 1960, which is rich in such minerals as cobalt and copper.

However, Pope John Paul II has cautioned the world's powerful nations against seeing African nations like the for-



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

Webster parish builds memorial

Holy Trinity Parish, Webster, dedicated a memorial to the unborn June 1 in the parish cemetery after two years of planning and construction. The black India granite monument, designed by Deacon Leo Kester (seated, left), was built with \$20,000 in donated money, and donated labor. The cone-shaped shaft, intended to represent the torso of a child, bears an engraved depiction of a mother and infant, and the words, "I will never forget you. Behold I have inscribed you on the palm of my hand" (Isaiah 49: 15, 16). Around the monument are four concrete benches, concrete walks, flowers and a stone on which is engraved, "In memory of babies killed by abortion."

mer Zaire as mere pawns in a game to gain global economic supremacy.

"Self-interest and efforts to reinforce positions of dominance should be resisted so that developing nations will not be seen as mere sources of raw materials or as markets for finished products, but as true partners in a new and more just international order," the pope said in a speech on Africa at the Vatican in January.

In addition to asking the U.S. government to influence Kabila's government toward democracy, Lee said U.S. Catholics could help people in the Democratic Republic of Congo by contributing to Catholic Relief Services, the U.S. bishops' international relief and development agency.

According to information from CRS, the agency has been focusing on health and nutrition programs in the former Zaire, as well as food distribution and housing rehabilitation. For example, the agency gave money to a Catholic youth seeking to

rebuild homes during the fighting, the report said.

The information from CRS pointed out that countries bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo are also the site of agency work. The information notes that CRS is working on drought relief programs in northern Burundi, and refugee resettlement projects in Rwanda.

Meanwhile, civil war has broken out in the Republic of Congo, a nation that borders the Democratic Republic of Congo, the reports said, adding that CRS is preparing for relief work there.

Tom Garofalo, CRS communications associate for Central and East Africa, said Catholics interested in donating to the agency's work can send contributions to: Catholic Relief Services, 209 West Fayette St., Baltimore, Md. 21201-3443. Donors may designate what country or region they wish their funds to assist, he said.

This article contains reporting by Catholic News Service.

Diocesan institutions and groups honor local activists

A number of groups and organizations presented awards to individuals in the diocese this spring. The following is a partial list of award winners.

Lumina-Lux

Elaine M. Tunaitis, M.D., and George Huther Jr. received the 1997 Lumina-Lux Awards May 6 from the Nazareth Schools, Rochester.

The awards are given annually to graduates of the Nazareth schools — Nazareth Academy high school for girls, and the co-educational Nazareth Hall (prekindergarten through eighth grade) — who exemplify the schools' commitment to the community.

Tunaitis, medical director of the Park Ridge Health Connection, is a 1966 graduate of Nazareth Academy.

Huther, founder of the Huther-Doyle Memorial Institute, a treatment clinic, is a 1946 graduate of Nazareth Hall.

Catholic schools

The Catholic School Board of Monroe County presented the John Peter Medaille and Elizabeth Ann Seton Memorial awards at a dinner May 16.

John Peter Medaille awards — named for the Jesuit priest who provided spiritual guidance for the Sisters of St. Joseph founders and given to people who serve the community — were presented to Judge Frank Geraci Jr. and Sister Edwardine Weaver, RSM.

Geraci, a graduate of St. Monica's School and McQuaid Jesuit High School, has served on quadrant planning boards, the Catholic School Board of Monroe County and is currently chair of Our Lady

of Mercy High School Board of Governors.

Sister Weaver has served as a teacher, administrator, assistant superintendent and superintendent of Catholic schools, and founded the Catholic School Leadership program at the University of Rochester.

The Elizabeth Ann Seton Memorial awards went to the late Grace Conway and the late Gina Ouweleen.

Conway became the first lay person to serve as the assistant superintendent for personnel for the Catholic Schools Office.

Ouweleen, a graduate of St. Margaret Mary School, Our Lady of Mercy High School and Nazareth College, was the founding chair of the Rochester Federation of Catholic School Parents and was active with the New York State Federation of Catholic School Parents.

St. Bernard's Institute

The Women's Scholarship Committee of St. Bernard's Institute honored six women June 3 for their church and community activities.

Patricia Federowicz of Apalachin is a volunteer and leader in promoting the role of women in the church.

Sister Elizabeth MacKinnon, DC, Rochester, provides mental health services and support of the poor and neglected.

Marcia Mendola is a volunteer at St. Louis Church, Pittsford, who has been active in fundraising and in calling attention to social injustices.

Theresa Stanley of Ithaca is an advocate for children, and has been a teacher, a spiritual adviser and a director of family programs.

Shirley Toole of Geneva has served as president of the Diocesan Pastoral Coun-

cil.

Nancy Tosch, a member of Corpus Christi Parish, Rochester, has recruited people to work with her parish's ministries, and has worked with the bereaved and with individuals seeking spiritual direction.

Finger Lakes Social Ministry

The board of directors of Finger Lakes Social Ministry awarded the 1997 Sharing the Light Award June 11 to four recipients for their service to the community.

Robert E. Kernan Jr., president and chief executive officer at Seneca Falls Savings Bank and a member of St. Patrick's Parish in Seneca Falls, has served on the boards of a number of church and civic groups, including St. Patrick's finance and endowment trust committees and the Finger Lakes Social Ministry Finance Committee.

Also honored were LaVerne M. Sessler, a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Waterloo; and Doris and Merle Tucker, members of the United Methodist Church in Seneca Falls.

Women Needed for Hormone Therapy Research

As they search for the combinations of hormone replacement therapy that are both safe and effective, the Reproductive Endocrinology Unit and Menopause Center at the University of Rochester Medical Center seek women to participate in a study.

Volunteers must be healthy, post-menopausal women between the ages of 40 and 65. After a physical examination, women will be randomized to one of 8 treatment groups and receive various combinations of an FDA-approved estrogen and/or progestin, or placebo.

During this one-year study, volunteers are seen every three months. Benefits to volunteers include free Pap smears and lab tests, free mammogram, and possible relief of menopausal symptoms based on the medication(s) they receive. Compensation of \$450 is available. Women who have had a hysterectomy are not eligible.

Women interested in participating can call Wanda Rivers at 275-7891.