

WORLD & NATION

Church fears for missionaries in Sierra Leone

By Lynne Weil
Catholic News Service

ROME — Rebels in Sierra Leone were holding a dozen missionaries amid fighting between rebel groups and government-backed forces.

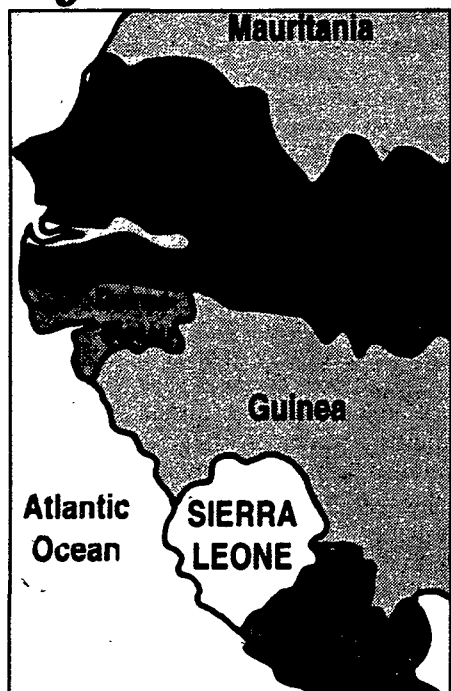
The attacks occurred on the heels of the kidnapping of the archbishop of Freetown, capital of Sierra Leone.

Details of the most recent incidents were made available Jan. 19 by MISNA, an Italian Catholic missionary news agency.

The agency reported that Xaverian Father Mario Guerra, 64, kidnapped in mid-November, was released briefly Jan. 12, only to return to his captors according to a prior agreement.

The Italian-born priest had reached a Xaverian community in Kissy, east of Freetown, on foot. He had lunch at the mission and spoke by radio with Bishop George Biguzzi of Makeni, Sierra Leone — the diocese from which he had been kidnapped — before returning to his captors on foot.

Shortly thereafter, MISNA reported, rebels raided the community and kid-



napped four Xaverian priests, three Italian and one Spanish. One of them, 67-year-old Father Luis Peres, had traveled to the re-

gion to help re-educate child soldiers and reportedly took refuge in Kissy when the fighting started.

On Jan. 14, the rebels returned to the Kissy community and kidnapped six nuns from the Missionaries of Charity and abducted an Italian Xaverian brother. MISNA reported that since the Kissy region fell into rebel hands Jan. 10, two other missionaries had been kidnapped and released, and four were isolated by the fighting around the Kissy community.

The two released missionaries, Fathers Maurizio Boa and Giuliano Pini, members of the Congregation of St. Joseph, told Vatican Radio Jan. 18 that they had initially accompanied the rebels in the hope of meeting Father Guerra, but they soon realized that this was only an excuse to take them prisoner.

Father Pini told Vatican Radio that Nigerian-led troops taking part in the government offensive against the rebels freed the two priests, then nearly shot them in the belief that they were Ukrainian mercenaries. Their lives were spared, Father Pini said, only because a military chaplain rec-

ognized them as missionaries.

Rebels kidnapped Archbishop Joseph Ganda of Freetown Jan. 11 or 12. Bishop Biguzzi spoke by radio with a man claiming to be the archbishop's captor and said he had the same voice as a man claiming responsibility for Father Guerra's kidnapping in an earlier radio conversation.

Bishop Biguzzi told Vatican Radio he thought the rebels were kidnapping church workers to gain publicity, hoping that an international outcry would gain them concessions when releasing captives during an eventual peace process.

Catholic leaders in Sierra Leone have refused to accept any conditions for the release of their personnel and "we have decided not to make a big stir in the media in order to refrain from giving them importance," the bishop said.

Bishop Biguzzi said that although people in the North are now harvesting rice and potatoes, with so many people displaced by the fighting there is sure to be a severe shortage of food.

The bishop has appealed to international aid organizations to prepare for that.

Officials face manslaughter charges in women's clinic case

PHOENIX (CNS) — The doctor and administrator at the now-closed A-Z Women's Center in Phoenix have been charged with manslaughter in the case of a woman who bled to death following an abortion there last April.

Arrested Jan. 12 were Dr. John Biskind, 72, a gynecologist who practiced at the Phoenix facility and in Ohio, where he lives part of the year, and Carol Stuart, 61, administrator of the center until it was forced to close in July. They are charged in the April 17 death of LouAnne Herron, a 33-year-old mother of two who died from a punctured uterus just hours after Biskind

performed a late-term abortion. State investigators said Biskind left the clinic and Herron did not receive medical care for more than three hours.

In announcing the indictments, Maricopa County Attorney Rick Romley said, "The conduct by Biskind is so outrageous it shocks the conscience."

Teresa Wagner, legal analyst for human rights and life issues at the Family Research Council in Washington, said: "Biskind's utter disregard for his patient's health reveals how far the callous, money-driven abortion industry is from truly being 'pro-woman.'"

According to *The Arizona Republic* daily

newspaper, a judge set bail for each of the defendants at \$32,000. If convicted, Biskind and Stuart face penalties ranging from probation to 12 years in prison.

Just months after Herron's death, Biskind was involved in another controversy when he delivered a baby girl June 30 during what was supposed to have been a partial-birth abortion.

A day earlier, the 17-year-old seeking the abortion had an ultrasound test showing her baby's gestation period at 23 weeks. Arizona law prohibits abortions after the 24th week without proof of medical necessity.

However, during the procedure, Biskind

realized the baby was more developed than 23 weeks, and delivered a 6 pound, 2 ounce baby in about her 37th week of gestation. The infant suffered a cracked skull and some facial cuts, but no brain damage. In July, plans were being made for her adoption by a Texas couple.

Biskind also had been investigated and reprimanded for previous cases involving inappropriate prescriptions and the bleeding death of another patient in 1995.

The Arizona Medical Board suspended his license in July, pending a hearing. However, he gave up his Arizona medical license in August and his Ohio license later.

CALENDAR

Livingston County

Religious Activities

■ **JAN. 24-26 — Retreat:** sponsored by St. Joseph and St. William Faith Community; St. Joseph Church, 14 Washington St., Livonia; 7-8:30 p.m. each evening; call 716/346-3815.

Monroe County

Fundraisers

■ **SAT, JAN. 23 — Clothing drive:** by Hope Hall Parent Teacher Student Organization; Hope Hall, 1612 Buffalo Rd., Gates; 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

■ **SAT, JAN. 23 — Non-golf tournament:** to benefit Sheen Housing; silent auction, 50/50 reverse raffle, prize drawings; 4-7 p.m.; call 716/461-4263.

■ **SAT, JAN. 30 — Clothing drive:** sponsored by Nazareth Academy Parents Association; Nazareth Academy, 1001 Lake Ave., Rochester; 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

■ **JAN. 30-31 — Antique show:** and sale; Our Lady of Mercy High School, 1437 Blossom Rd., Rochester; Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; \$3 donation.

Meetings

■ **THU, JAN. 21 — Informational meeting:** full-day kindergarten; Good Shepherd School Library, 3288 E. Henrietta Rd., Henrietta; 7-8 p.m.; 716/334-5100.

■ **THU, JAN. 21 — Information night:** kindergarten program; St. Helen School, 150 Lettington Dr., Gates; 7 p.m.; 716/235-2391.

■ **THU, JAN. 21 — Support group:** Morninglory; video, "Listen to Your Sadness"; St. Joseph's Parish resource lounge, 43 Gebhardt Rd., Penfield; 7:30 p.m.; free.

■ **FRI, JAN. 22 — Program:** "Save Our Land, Save Our Towns"; Thomas Hylton; Dugan Center, St. Mary's Church, 15 St. Mary's Pl., Rochester; 7:30-9 p.m.; 716/232-7168.

■ **JAN. 22-24 — Program:** "Gifted with Health & Well-being"; Sr. Mary Louise Mitchell, SSJ, presenter; Sisters of St. Joseph Spirituality Center, 402 Rogers Pky., Rochester; Fri. 7-9 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m.-2 p.m.; \$80 includes meals; 716/336-4370.

■ **SAT, JAN. 23 — Opportunities:** for Catholic 20's/30's; "New Beginnings" mini-retreat Jan. 23; serve dinner at Blessed Sacrament soup kitchen Jan. 26; dinner at Distillery Jan. 28; for information leave message on Odyssey hotline, 716/328-3228 or 800/388-7177, ext. 375 or e-mail Liz at emw@roccsoft.com.

■ **MON, JAN. 25 — Registration deadline:** for Feb. 1 Book of the Month Club; "The Gift of the Red Bird" by Paula D'Arcy; Gail Bruce, presenter; Mercy Prayer Center, 65 Highland Ave., Rochester; noon-1:30 p.m. or 7:30-9:30 p.m.; freewill offering; 716/473-6893.

■ **TUE, JAN. 26 — Program:** "Power of the Word: Written and Spoken"; Mark Hare, presenter; Sisters of St. Joseph Spirituality Center, 402 Rogers Pky., Rochester; 7:30-9 p.m.; \$10; 716/336-4370.

■ **THU, JAN. 28 — Course:** Judaism and Christianity; Rabbi Laurence Kotok and Fr. Joseph Brennan, teachers; Jewish Community Center, 1200 Edgewood Ave., Rochester; Thursdays through March 11; 10:30 a.m.-noon; \$36; 716/244-7060, ext. 242.

Religious Activities

■ **FRI, JAN. 22 — Registration deadline:** Jan. 29, 30, 31 weekend retreat "A Time for Renewal"; Mercy Srs. Colette Baldwin, Jody Kearney, Therese Richardson, presenters; Mercy Prayer Center, 65 Highland Ave., Rochester; Fri. 7 p.m.-Sun. 1 p.m.; \$85; 716/473-6893.

■ **THU, JAN. 28 — Registration deadline:** for Feb. 4 retreat "A Day to Call Your Own"; Mercy Prayer Center; 65 Highland Ave., Rochester; 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m.; \$10; 716/473-6893.

Social Activities

■ **FRI, JAN. 22 — Concert:** organist David Craighead; St. Anne Church, 1600 Mt. Hope Ave., Rochester; 8 p.m.; free.

■ **SAT, JAN. 23 — Winter Guard 99:** hosted by Bishop Kearney High School Performance Ensemble; Bishop Kearney High School, 125 Kings Hwy. S., Irondequoit; 7 p.m.; \$5.

■ **JAN. 23-24 — Concert:** Musica Spei; choral music of Thomas Tallis and William Byrd; Sat., 7:30 p.m., St. John's Episcopal Church, 183 N. Main St., Canandaigua; Sun., 4 p.m., St. Anne Church, 1600 Mt. Hope Ave., Rochester; suggested donation \$5; 716/244-7764.

■ **SUN, JAN. 24 — Recital:** Nazareth College Voice Faculty; Gerald G. Wilmot Hall, Nazareth College, 4245 East Ave., Rochester; 3 p.m.; free.

■ **MON, JAN. 25 — Informational meeting:** Hosting Irish children; Spencerport White Church, 55 Church St., Spencerport; 7 p.m.; 716/225-8550.

■ **TUE, JAN. 26 — Films:** "The Scar of Shame" and "Veiled Aristocrats"; St. John Fisher professor Douglas W. Howard, presenter; George Eastman House, 900 East Ave., Rochester; 8 p.m.; \$5, \$4 for students/members; 716/271-4090.

Workshops

■ **WED, JAN. 27 — Registration deadline:** for Feb.

2 workshop "We Have Seen the Lord!"; (Preaching Lent and Easter in Cycle A); St. Bernard's Institute, 1100 S. Goodman St., Rochester; 9:45 a.m.-3 p.m.; \$35; send check payable to St. Bernard's Institute to SBI's Continuing Education Office, 1100 S. Goodman St., Rochester, NY 14620.

Steuben County

Fundraisers

■ **SUN, JAN. 24 — Spaghetti dinner:** sponsored by St. Joseph's Confirmation Class; St. Joseph's School, 209 Fremont St., Wayland; noon-2 p.m.; adults \$6, children 5-12 \$3.50, children 4 and under \$2; takeouts available.

Yates Ontario Wayne

Fundraisers

■ **SUN, JAN. 24 — Pancake breakfast:** St. Mary's School, 16 Gibson St., Canandaigua; 6:30 a.m.-noon; adults \$5, children and seniors \$4; proceeds for youth to attend 1999 National Catholic Youth Convention.