

# DIOCESAN NEWS

## Priest-peace-activist decries Iraqi sanctions' effects

By Rob Cullivan  
Staff Writer

ROCHESTER — In June, 1982, Father John Dear, S.J., was fresh out of college and decided to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. At the same time, Israel invaded Lebanon, and the future priest found himself near the border between the two countries at the Sea of Galilee in Israel.

It was there, in a church devoted to the Beatitudes, that he saw inscribed on the walls "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons and daughters of God." Father Dear said this and the other

Beatitudes prompted him to feel called to work for peace and justice. As he left the church he looked up to the sky and asked God for a sign telling him he was on the right path. At that moment, three Israeli fighter jets flew over him toward Lebanon, and in the distance he saw the planes drop bombs that exploded with a loud roar.

"I said, 'OK, God, I'll work for peace and justice, and I'll never ask for a sign again,'" Father Dear told about 150 people in Strong Auditorium at Colgate Rochester Divinity School, where St. Bernard's Institute is located.

Since he saw those Israeli fighter planes,

Father Dear, a North Carolina native, has devoted his life to promoting nonviolence and conflict resolution in such places as Northern Ireland and El Salvador. He was ordained a Jesuit priest in 1993.

In 1998, he became the first Catholic priest to be named executive director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a Nyack, N.Y.-based international peace organization whose membership has included the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi. Father Dear has been arrested more than 50 times for acts of civil disobedience, particularly against military bases and nuclear-weapon sites.

Father Dear's speech was the first annual "Shannon Peace Lecture" at St. Bernard's. The institute named the lecture series in honor of Msgr. William H. Shannon, professor emeritus of Nazareth College of Rochester, a Thomas Merton scholar and a lifelong peace proponent.

At the moment, one of Father Dear's main causes is drumming up support to end economic sanctions against Iraq imposed by the United Nations after the 1991 Persian Gulf War (see related story, page 1). Father Dear noted the United Nations itself has acknowledged that the sanctions primarily hurt Iraqi civilians, rather than its rulers. The United Nations estimates

that more than a million Iraqis have died from the sanctions' effect on Iraq's food, water, sanitation and medical systems.

In 1998, Father Dear led a Fellowship of Reconciliation delegation to Iraq, where he claims to have met many medical workers distressed over the U.S.-supported sanctions' effects on Iraq's young people. In particular, he said he remembered one Iraqi medical worker referring to the Iraqi "no-fly zones" patrolled by U.S. and British jets in northern and southern Iraq.

"What have these children done to you?" she asked, pointing to child patients in a hospital. "They're innocent. They haven't violated your air space."

During his talk, Father Dear also decried the death penalty, the proliferation of handguns and NATO's war against Serbia last year. In a follow-up interview, Father Dear noted that he upholds the seamstress-garment approach to all life issues, including abortion, and said he believes everyone — including the world's governments — must completely disarm and learn to live in trust with one another.

"We promote the sanctity of life at all levels, from the unborn to the children of Iraq," he said. "I think it's our future that we're all going to have to become people who adhere to the consistent ethic of life."



Mike Mergen/Photo intern

### Pro-life director visits center

Father Frank Pavone blesses the Problem Pregnancy Help Center in Rochester during a visit to the area Sunday April 2. Father Pavone has been national director of Priests for Life since 1993.

### Catholic Daughters plan state event

By Mike Latona  
Staff Writer

For the first time in 30 years, the Catholic Daughters of the Americas state convention will be held in the Rochester diocese.

More than 800 delegates are expected to attend the convention, which will take place April 26-30 at the Thruway Marriott on West Henrietta Road in Henrietta.

Marian Love, convention co-chair, said the state gathering — held every two years — is an exciting event for all involved.

"It's the joy and the camaraderie, the fact that we all have one singular purpose. Our motto is 'Unity and charity.' You really feel you belong," said Love, a Catholic Daughter since 1967. Love belongs to Court 1173, St. Michael-Penn Yan, and is a parishioner at St. Felix/St. Francis Cluster in Clifton Springs and Phelps.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark will help kick off the convention by celebrating a 10 a.m. Mass on Thursday, April 27. Following numerous workshops and meetings, another highlight will be the election of five state officers who will be installed at an April 29 Mass.

Patricia Younglove, the state convention's other co-chair, said one of her top priorities at the gathering will be revitalization of Catholic Daughters membership — especially in the Rochester Diocese.

"Hopefully, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we can go around to some of

these parishes and get some of the young people involved," said Younglove, a Catholic Daughter for the last 10 years. She belongs to Court 924, Gleason-Clyde, and is also religious-education administrator for Catholic Community of the Blessed Trinity in Wayne and Cayuga counties.

Catholic Daughters of the Americas supports many of the Catholic Church's religious, charitable and educational endeavors, offering financial support in those areas. Younglove, noting that her Catholic Daughters court is actively involved in prison ministry and protesting the death penalty, said the Catholic Daughters also take part in numerous social justice causes.

Love observed that the Catholic Daughters in New York state are a special group, due to the fact that the national organization was founded in 1903 in Utica.

Membership totals approximately 20,000 women across New York state, with 1,000 coming from the Rochester Diocese. In addition to Penn Yan and Clyde, other courts located in the diocese include Court 139, St. Joseph-Corning; Court 194, St. Ann-Hornell; Court 240, Santa Maria-Ithaca; Court 263, Auburn; Court 416, Annunciation-Ithaca; Court 469, St. Rose of Lima-Owego; Court 628, Lourdes-Watkins Glen; Court 806, Theresa-Waterloo; Court 824, Seneca Falls-Seneca Falls; Court 836, Isabelle-Bloomfield; Court 931, Nativity of Our Lady-Brockport; Court 1139, Our Lady of the Cenacle-Rochester; and Court 1189, Fitzsimons-Lima.

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