

WORLD & NATION

Churches escape Mississippi flood damage

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Catholic News Service

LA CROSSE, Wis. — As its floodwaters hit Wisconsin in April, the Mississippi River became more like Mississippi Lake.

A late April survey of parishes in riverside towns by the *Times Review*, La Crosse diocesan newspaper, showed that no church buildings in the diocese were affected, but plenty of parishioners were in one way or another.

Flooded basements were the most common problem. But in Prairie du Chien parts of Main Street were under 8 feet or more of standing water.

Up north in Prescott, where the Mississippi River first meets the Wisconsin border, Father Edward Shuttleworth of St. Joseph Church said a few parishioners on the river got flooded basements. "I don't think it was as bad as they initially thought it would be," he said.

The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, who staff the school at St. Joseph's, had offered their convent for any who might need it, but that service wasn't needed, he said.

Ninety miles downriver in Fountain City, Father Douglas Robertson, pastor of Immaculate Conception Parish, said, "The town weathered it well."

"What I thought was edifying was how people helped each other," he said. "People who were not affected were sandbagging for those who were."

What hit the town most, Father Robertson reported, was the traffic. Wisconsin Highway 35, the main north-south route along the Mississippi, was closed in Fountain City because it was under water, forcing motorists to detour through side streets.

Thirty miles to the north, the bridge from Nelson to Wabasha, Minn., was closed because the Wisconsin approach to the bridge was under water.

The bridge closing forced traffic from both states to go downriver and cross the bridge at Winona, Minn., just below Fountain City. Father Robertson said the extra traffic congestion was more of a headache than anything else.

The town's recent experience with the 1997 flood helped, Father Robertson said. "The sandbagging began before it came," he said, and residents "knew where it was going to flood."

It was ironic that the flooding occurred as Catholics were celebrating the Easter Vigil, he added. "Here we are celebrating the Red Sea and baptism" while water is rising up around them.

Father Lawrence Dunklee, pastor of St. Charles Parish in Genoa, said his parishioners were taking the flood in good stride.



Homes located on Abel Island in Guttenberg, Iowa, are surrounded by the main channel of the Mississippi River April 19. Catholic agencies in several states were helping those affected by the flooding in the Midwest.

Genoa is 20 miles south of La Crosse, just above Iowa's northern border.

"There's some water," Father Dunklee said, "but nothing on the roads. Some places near the river have had some small amount of water — but nothing to get excited about."

For Mary Fitzpatrick at Catholic Charities headquarters in La Crosse, the trickle of calls coming in specifically for flood disaster relief seemed to belie the 16- to 24-foot crests which towns up and down the river have been experiencing.

She said she has put a call in to the national umbrella agency, Catholic Charities USA, "to see what they have in mind for this area. Now, we're just waiting to hear back from them."

Fitzpatrick added that Catholic Charities must wait to see the full brunt of the flood's

financial damage, since forecasters were not yet ready to say when the flood waters would finally recede.

That damage is expected to run into millions of dollars in La Crosse County alone.

By all accounts, Prairie du Chien, in the southwest corner of the diocese, was hit the hardest. Main Street, usually a bustling residential street, was blocked off.

Parts of the street had been under 1 to 8 feet of water for almost a week before the river crested April 20 at 24 feet, 7 feet above flood stage.

Most houses along Main Street have a fishing skiff, canoe or other water transportation tied to their porch as a way of getting up and down the street.

Heavy April rains and new snow in Minnesota meant that the floodwaters would subside more slowly than usual.

Reardon presents study connecting abortion and suicide

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (CNS) — There is a link between women who have had abortions and suicide, says researcher David Reardon. He works with the Elliot Institute in Springfield, a nonprofit organization that studies post-abortion issues.

Reardon presented results of a study he conducted with several colleagues on the abortion-suicide connection at the World Congress on Women's Mental Health, held March 27-31 in Berlin.

In a phone interview with Catholic News Service after he returned from Berlin, Reardon said his study differed from other research that has been done on the topic. His focused on a larger population and was based on data of women from the United States, he noted.

The Reardon study focused on the medical records and death certificates of

more than 173,000 low-income women from California who had state-funded deliveries or induced abortions in 1989.

From this sample of women, the average annual suicide rate per 100,000 was 3.0 for women who delivered babies and 7.8 for women who had abortions.

The national average suicide rate is 5.2 for women ages 15-44.

The data was solely "record based," said Reardon, comparing it with other post-abortion studies that have only been able to focus on women's own descriptions of having experienced personal struggles after having an abortion.

He said this new study also "demonstrates that the negative effects (of abortion) are large enough to show up" in death certificates in one regional area.

All are invited to Evening of Prayer to GOOD SAINT ANNE



Wednesday, May 2, 2001
at 7:30 PM

- Mass and Homily
- Candlelight Procession
- Veneration of the Relic of Saint Anne

This Saint Anne Evening Devotion is primarily a call to prayer. The evening is conducted in the same manner as at Ste. Anne de Beaupré in Canada. It is a great opportunity for the elderly, the disabled and other people who cannot come to the Canadian Shrine to experience a "mini-pilgrimage" in the Rochester area.

SAINT ANNE CHURCH

1600 Mt. Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620-4598

This evening devotion to Good Saint Anne will be conducted by Father Gerard Desrochers, C.Ss.R. of the famous Canadian Shrine of Ste. Anne de Beaupré. Father Desrochers was born in Montreal and studied theology in the United States. Back in Canada, he was appointed Professor in a Redemptorist Major Seminary, became Novice Master, preached Parish Missions and Retreats in both the French and English languages, and opened a Counseling Center at the Shrine of St. Anne de Beaupré where he is now Director of the Secretariat. He is involved in all movements of renewal, was responsible for the formation of permanent deacons and lay apostles, gives talks in Canada and other countries, writes every month in a variety of reviews, and is the author of many books and novenas to Saint Anne.

My father probably left because of _____.

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if you don't tell them you really do care.
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