

Attacks target NYC, Pentagon

WASHINGTON (CNS) — As a shocked nation watched the destruction at the World Trade Center in New York and massive damage to the Pentagon in Arlington, Va., Bishop Paul S. Loverde of Arlington asked everyone to pray "for an end to the madness of terrorism and violence."

The White House and U.S. Capitol were evacuated and other federal buildings closed down in the wake of the apparently coordinated attacks Sept. 11. Two passenger planes crashed into the twin towers of the trade center Sept. 11 and a third passenger plane crashed into the Pentagon.

Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick of Washington called for prayers and canceled other appointments to celebrate a midday Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Similar

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Masses were announced by other bishops around the country.

Steven Schiraldi, a Wall Street financial manager, was reached by phone in New York moments after the second tower of the World Trade Center was hit by a plane.

"I saw the second plane fly right past my window," he said.

Then he cut the conversation short with the comment: "I have to go now. They told us to evacuate the building. There is complete chaos here."

Later he told Catholic News Service that

after he saw the plane fly past his office window, he watched it crash into the trade center. "It disintegrated on impact. My heart was pounding. I've never been so scared in my life."

His office building is about a half mile from the World Trade Center, and once he was evacuated he couldn't breathe from all the soot outside. All around him people were "screaming, crying and praying," he said.

"Everybody was working together. Everyone became one. Everyone was helping one another," Schiraldi said.

Franciscan Father Joseph Gurdak, pastor of Our Lady of Sorrows Parish in Lower Manhattan, was celebrating a funeral Mass when he and the congregation heard

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Reuters/CNS

One tower of the World Trade Center is down and the other burns, before collapsing, after planes attacked Sept. 11.



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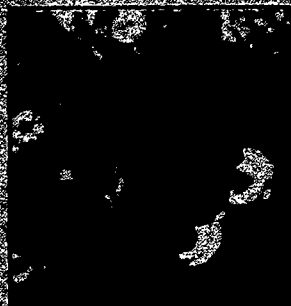
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Rates near 20% for non-Catholics attending Catholic high schools

It's quite natural for a high-school freshman to feel out of place in his or her new environment. For Adam Funderburk, this was true not only in the classrooms, but also in his school chapel.

When Funderburk attended a liturgy early in his freshman year at McQuaid Jesuit High School, it marked the first time he'd ever been to a Catholic Mass.

"It was a bit of a shock. People are standing up and sitting down, and I'm just nervously following along," recalled Funderburk, who belongs to Fairport's First Congregational Church of Christ. "I didn't know what to do, so I asked the guy next to me."

"He said 'I don't know either — I'm Jewish.'"

Funderburk, who graduated from McQuaid this past June, is one reason for the rising rate of non-Catholics opting for the seven Catholic high schools in the Rochester Diocese. Statistics provided by these schools show that approximately 3,434 students are enrolled in grades nine-12 for the 2001-02 school year. A total of 656, or just over 19 percent, aren't Catholic.

This percentage is more than four times the rate of 1979-80, the first year the diocese recorded such statistics. According to Sister of St. Joseph Anne Guerin, communications director for the Department of Catholic Schools, there were 304 non-Catholics out of 7,178 students at nine high schools that year — a percentage of just 4.2.

In 2001-02, the percentage varies from a low of 12 at Aquinas In-

stitute to a high of 36 at Nazareth Academy. The overall rate of 19.1 is slightly higher than for grades pre-K through eight, where 17 percent of the students were non-Catholic last year.

Sister of St. Joseph Ann Collins, executive director for Nazareth Schools, said the rising percentages are reflective of an era where Catholic schools are no longer an automatic choice for many Catholic families.

"Years ago you were told to register your kids at Catholic schools under the pain of persecution," Sister Collins said. She remarked that the majority of Catholic teens attended Catholic schools, rather than public — "but now it's the reverse."

Values-based education

Today's Catholic high schools feature students from Protestant denominations and non-Christian faiths as well, such as Jews and Muslims. Sister Collins noted that at Nazareth Academy, a large percentage of the non-Catholic population is African-American. Meanwhile, Mark Ball, director of admissions and communications at Bishop Kearney High School, said that students — many of whom weren't Catholic — from 11 countries enrolled at BK in 2000-01. The mix also includes Mormons who attend Geneva DeSales and Quakers attending Elmira Notre Dame.

Why would students and their families opt for a school that rep-

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