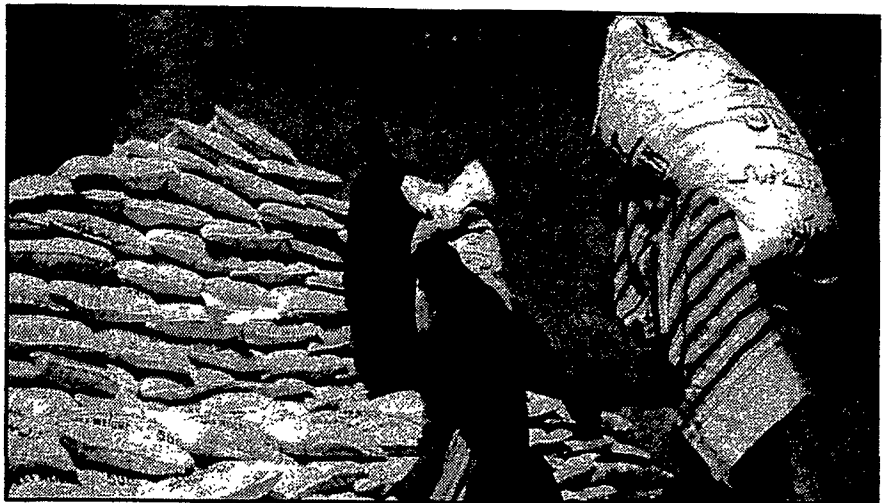


WORLD & NATION



Reuters/CNS

Food for refugees

Afghan workers at the U.N. World Food Program warehouse near Peshawar, Pakistan, stack sacks of wheat Sept. 24. Aid groups along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, already struggling to shelter and feed hundreds of thousands of displaced Afghans, were bracing for an onslaught of new refugees.

Nun assassinated in Colombia

TUMACO, Colombia (CNS) — The assassination of the head of the Tumaco diocesan social action office was aimed at curtailing church human rights work, said Bishop Gustavo Giron Higuera of Tumaco.

He criticized the Sept. 19 slaying of Sister Yolanda Ceron, diocesan director of social action as a "grave offense against the Catholic Church, which in Tumaco and Colombia fights for justice, life and peace."

Bishop Giron said Sister Ceron, a 38-year-old Colombian member of the Sisters of Mary, was killed instantly by gunfire around noon at the doorway of the Church of Our Lady of Mercy in Tumaco.

News reports said she was the 47th person slain within two months in the Tuma-

co area.

His Sept. 19 statement said the slaying was an "attack by dark forces promoting injustice." He did not mention any groups or people as suspects.

The social action commission of the Colombian bishops' conference also condemned the murder.

A Sept. 20 statement by Bishop Jaime Prieto Amaya of Barrancabermeja, commission president, asked authorities for an effective and rapid investigation and the punishment of those responsible.

Amnesty International, a London-based human rights organization, blamed Sister Ceron's murder on paramilitary groups that security forces allow to operate.

Charities now dealing with long-term needs

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Immediately after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, people gave blood in droves and donated vast quantities of food, water, clothes, batteries and cell phones for rescue workers.

But long-term needs in the wake of the tragedies in New York, at the Pentagon and in Pennsylvania are not so obvious, nor are they things people can easily collect from friends, neighbors or co-workers.

"The needs are decreasing from basic supplies to long-term, more labor-intensive needs," said John Keightley, vice president for development and communications for Catholic Charities USA, based in the Washington suburb of Alexandria, Va.

By Sept. 21, the organization had collected \$1 million at the national level to be allocated to diocesan Catholic Charities agencies. Emergency grants totaling \$20,000 already had gone to agencies in the Diocese of Rockville Centre, and the Diocese of Arlington, Va., where the Pentagon is located.

Catholic Charities in the Washington Archdiocese also has set up a \$20,000 emergency fund to aid families affected by the Pentagon attack.

For many of the local agencies, the immediate need has been to provide counselors, either through on-site counseling centers or 24-hour hot lines, to help both adults and children cope with the onslaught of grief, anger and loss from the attacks.

And as people have begun resuming their daily lives, practical problems — such

as how to make ends meet if they cannot work because of a layoff, an injury or the death of a working spouse in the tragedy — have arisen.

To this end, Keightley said, some local Catholic Charities agencies have begun to provide emergency cash assistance, money to defray burial costs, help with rent and mortgage payments or utilities and medical bills.

Some agencies also are providing legal assistance, emergency day care and programs to promote tolerance and understanding, particularly in areas with large Muslim communities.

Msgr. Kevin Sullivan, acting director of Catholic Charities New York, said his agency is still trying to determine how to use some of the funds it has collected.

"The immediate need for emergency medical help and blood was apparent," he said. What is not as easy to pinpoint, he added, is how best to provide ongoing support to families and how to help diverse communities come together.

Msgr. Sullivan was one of four representatives of Catholic Charities who attended a White House ceremony Sept. 18 that honored dozens of charitable organizations, including the Red Cross, Salvation Army and United Way, for their current disaster relief efforts.

During the event President Bush said, "Americans' love for America was channeled through our nation's great charities."

Those wishing to contribute to the Sept. 11 disaster fund may phone: (800) 919-9338, or mail a donation to: Catholic Charities USA, P.O. Box 25168, Alexandria, VA 22313-9788.

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