

Rochester priest welcomes news of N.J. accord

CAMDEN, N.J. (CNS) — The Catholic Diocese of Camden and Jewish community leaders of southern New Jersey have signed an agreement of understanding and cooperation.

Believed to be the second such agreement in the United States, it encourages joint action by the two faith communities, efforts to promote mutual understanding and closer contact between Catholic Charities and Jewish Family and Children's Services.

The Diocese of Rochester signed a similar agreement in 1996 with the Rochester Board of Rabbis and the Jewish Community Federation.

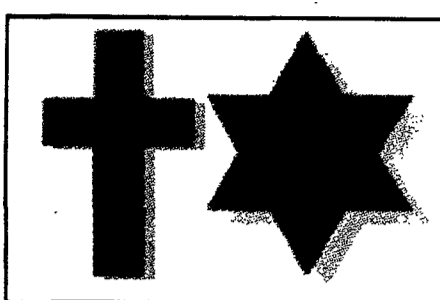
"I think it's very encouraging and I'm delighted to hear they've signed one in Camden," commented Father Joe Bren-

nan, who helped draft the Rochester Agreement. He noted the two agreements have similar priorities. "So it's a very exciting development to see this growth in good relations between the Catholic Church and the Jewish community in this country," he said.

"Many years of intense dialogue, celebrations, friendly disagreements and many long meetings helped to lay the foundation of our close relationship," Father Joseph D. Wallace, Camden diocesan director of ecumenical and interreligious affairs, said in an Oct. 4 statement.

Leaders of the two communities signed the agreement Sept. 20 at the Katz Community Center in Cherry Hill.

Catholic signers were Bishop Nicholas A. DiMarzio of Camden; Msgr. David F.



Budney, vicar general; and Msgr. Joseph W. Pokusa, chancellor.

Signing for the Jewish community were Michael Partnow, president of the Jewish Federation of Southern New Jersey; Joel Horowitz, president of the Jewish Community Relations Council; and Rabbi Aaron Krupnick, president of the Tri-

County Board of Rabbis of Camden, Gloucester and Burlington counties.

The Camden agreement calls for:

- The right of every human being to freedom of religion and conscience.
- Cooperation in combating anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism, racism and religious intolerance.
- Cooperation on areas of common concern such as promotion of moral values in public education.
- A common interest in working for a society free of violence and prejudice.
- More collaboration between parallel organizations, groups and individuals, such as Catholic Charities and Jewish Family and Children's Services, and Catholic and Jewish chaplains at area institutions.

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Inside This Week

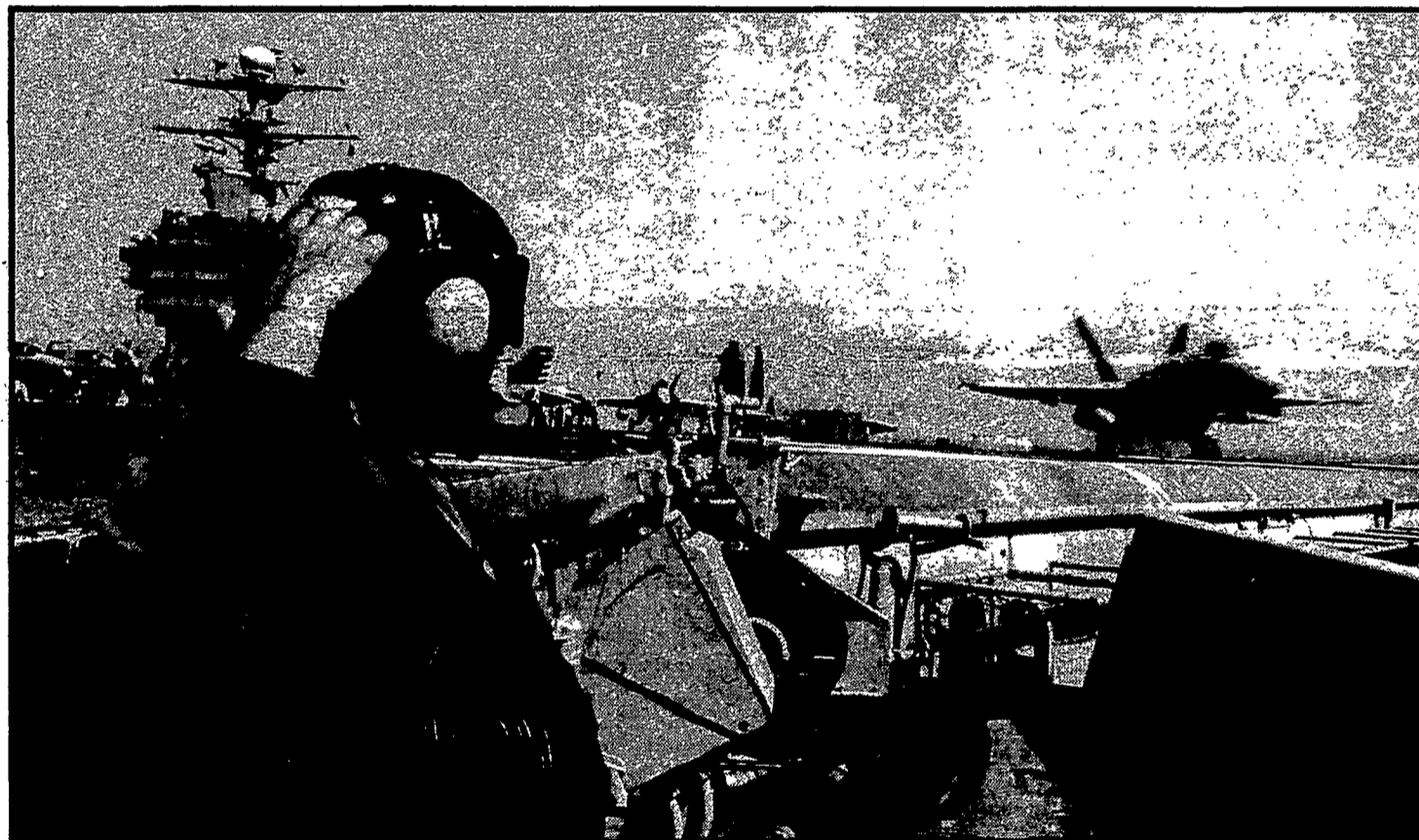


Walesa speaks of Polish 'solidarity'
Says people back the United States
— Page 3

How to tell kids about tragedies
'Parenting' offers words of wisdom
— Page 7



Scouts fly grand old flag high
Pledge of allegiance grows in meaning
— Page 12



CNS photo from U.S. Navy via Reuters

An F/A-18C Hornet is launched from the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson leading up to the strike against al Qaeda terrorist training camps and Taliban military installations in Afghanistan Oct. 7. The carrier was operating in the Arabian Sea as part of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Air strikes prompt prayer

By John Thavis and Judith Sudilovsky
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — News of U.S. air strikes in Afghanistan prompted prayers for peace at the Vatican, with some church leaders voicing qualified support for the retaliation and others apprehensive about civilian casualties. Meanwhile, Jerusalem church officials criticized the air strikes.

The United States blamed Afghanistan's government for sheltering Osama bin Laden, the mastermind behind Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States that killed more than 5,000 people. The United States said the strikes were aimed at terrorists, not at Muslims; it also dropped food to starving Afghans in the countryside.

Pope John Paul II and nearly 250 bishops meeting in a monthlong synod began their Oct. 8 session with a special Latin-language

prayer by Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, one of the synod's president-delegates.

The pope made no specific comment on the first night of U.S. air strikes, which included the firing of 50 cruise missiles and bombing runs by 40 planes against military targets in a number of Afghan cities. U.S. officials said the aim was to destroy suspected terror camps run by Osama bin Laden and weaken the ruling Taliban regime that harbors him.

A few hours before the bombing began, the pope repeated his invitation to make the rosary a daily prayer for peace and against terrorism in the month of October.

Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza, president of the U.S. bishops' conference, said that on the basis of the first wave of bombings, the U.S. retaliation seemed "appropriate and measured." That's something church leaders will have to keep evaluating as events

unfold, he said in Rome Oct. 8.

Bishop Fiorenza said the United States "needed to take this military action" for two reasons: to get humanitarian aid in to the suffering Afghan people and to end bin Laden's operations.

"Hopefully, there were no civilian casualties. As long as they're attacking military installations, I think the response is appropriate and measured," he said.

Bishop Fiorenza said he hoped Muslim leaders around the world would understand that the retaliation was an act of self-defense by the United States.

"I certainly hope and pray that it doesn't lead to any other terrorist actions anywhere around the world," he said.

Church leaders in Pakistan voiced fears that anti-Western sentiment in their country could spur attacks against the minority

Continued on page 10