

# On the MOVE

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## 'Religious people should stand together'

Following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, Patrick Curran said, he was disturbed by news reports that Osama bin Laden — the suspected ringleader of the attacks — was asking all Muslims to turn against the United States.

"If Muslims everywhere believe this, was there danger for me? I kind of wondered if a person I bumped into on the street might try to hurt me," said Patrick, 13, who attends Rochester's St. John the Evangelist Church (Humboldt Street).

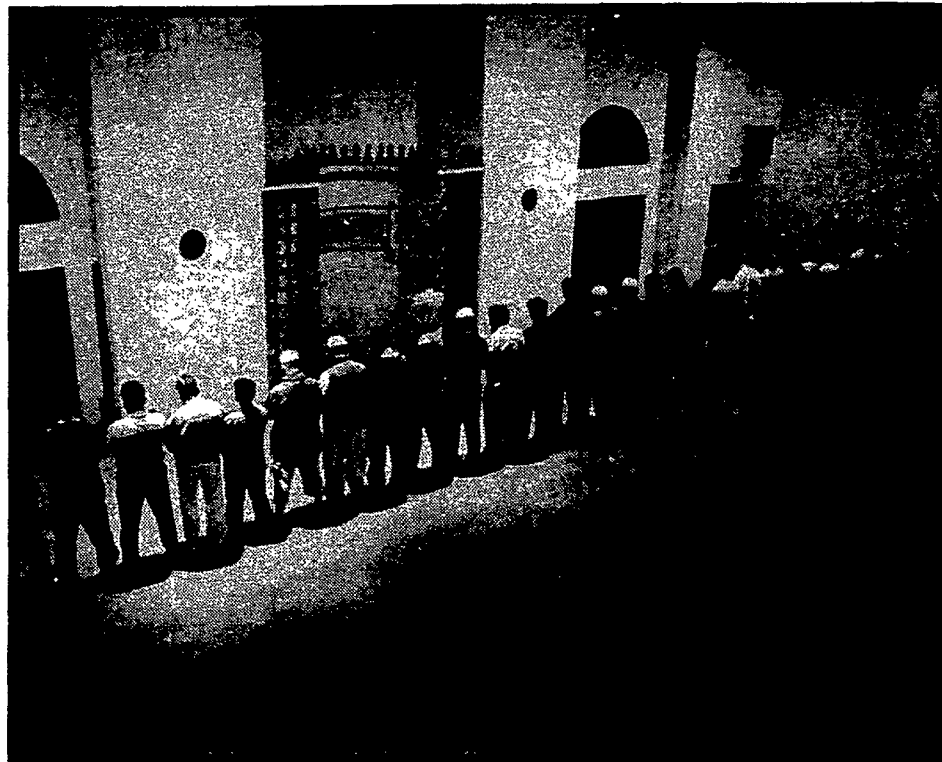
At an Oct. 14 gathering at the Islamic Center of Rochester, Patrick was reminded that the great majority of Muslims denounce violence. That point was repeatedly made by several Muslims who hosted more than 50 Catholic teens and adult chaperons from the Rochester area.

"Islam teaches peace. No way we can be with people who terrorize. We do not consider this act has any justification," said Dr. Muhammad Shafiq, who serves as the Islamic Center's imam, or spiritual leader.

"My religion is not this world network that's out to destroy America," said Ismael Kareem, who converted from Christianity to Islam nearly nine years ago.

Kareem described the Sept. 11 tragedy, which killed more than 5,000 people in New York City, Washington and Pennsylvania, as "repugnant." He said the terrorist network has taken the Islam faith and "co-opted it to their own beliefs."

This was the first of two events at the Islamic Center for parish youth groups. Dennis Reno and Theresa Fantone, co-organizers, said approximately 100 people were expected to attend a similar session at the Islamic Center Oct. 21. Reno said he's also planning a program this January



Men and boys pray on the ground level of the Islamic Center Oct. 14.

in which the Winton-Empire parishes (St. John the Evangelist, St. Ambrose and St. James), where he is youth minister, will host Muslim teens.

Having Christians visit Muslim worship sites and vice-versa, Reno said, will serve to diminish mutual fear and mistrust that the terrorist attacks may have triggered.

Imam Shafiq strongly endorsed these meetings of differing faiths as well, saying, "I think religious people should stand together."

On Oct. 14, members of the Islamic

Center answered numerous questions about their Muslim religion, also known as Islam. Kareem, during his presentation, noted that Muslims and Christians actually have many similarities: Both religions are spread around the world and have many ethnic backgrounds; and both believe in God, angels and prophets.

Muslims are mentioned in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which states, "The plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first

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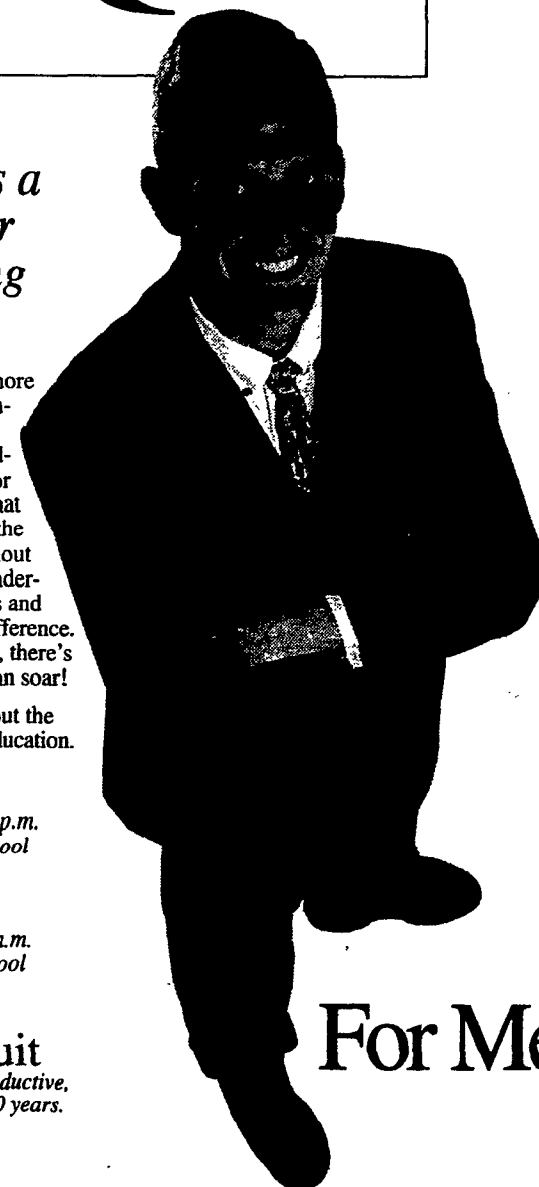
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