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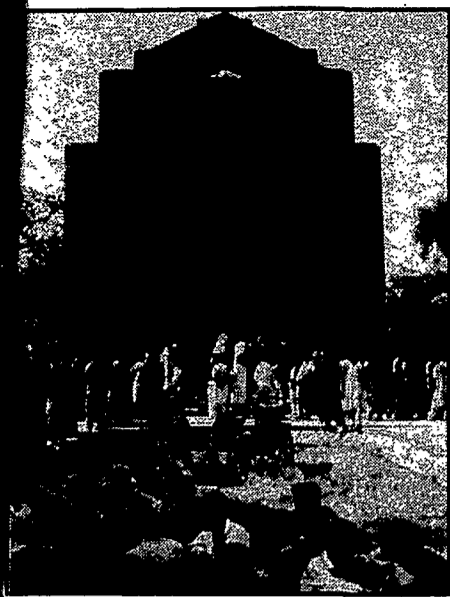
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Reuters/CNS

St. Dominic Catholic Church in Pakistan draws mourners.

Pope expresses sympathy for slain

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II called the slaying of 16 Christians in a Pakistani church a "tragic act of intolerance" and sent his condolences to the families of the victims.

Five masked gunmen burst into the Catholic Church of St. Dominic in Bahawalpur Oct. 28, and fired automatic weapons at the Protestant congregation for about five minutes. It was the worst act of anti-Christian violence in recent memory in Pakistan.

The gunmen escaped, and there was no immediate claim of responsibility for the shootings. Church leaders in the area said the attack appeared to be a reaction — probably by extremist Muslims — against

U.S. air strikes in Afghanistan.

"Whenever something happens with America, they attack Catholic churches," Father Rocus Patras, a priest at St. Dominic's, told reporters.

Soon after the pope was informed of the killings, the Vatican released a telegram sent in the pope's name to Archbishop Alessandro D'Errio, apostolic nuncio to Pakistan, expressing the pope's deep sadness and message to victims' families.

The victims were members of the Church of Pakistan, comprising Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Lutheran congregations, who have used the Catholic church for worship for several decades, Bishop Joseph Coutts of Faisalabad told Catholic News Service.

In a telephone interview, Bishop Coutts said Pakistani authorities met with Christ-

ian church leaders across Pakistan in the hours following the attack to offer condolences and assure additional protection.

"This incident has taken terrorism to a completely new level. We've never had this type of incident in Pakistan," Bishop Coutts told CNS.

The gunmen "were very well armed" and fired more than 100 rounds at the approximately 70 people in attendance, he said.

The bishop said there were fewer people at the Oct. 28 service because Pakistan's clocks were pushed back an hour the previous night. A Catholic Mass preceded the Protestant service, he added.

"Some people were not aware of the time change; if the congregation had been bigger, it would have been a much larger tragedy," he said.



Catholic Courier

DIocese of Rochester, New York ■ VOL. 113 NO. 5 ■ THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2001 ■ 75¢ ■ 12 PAGES

Inside This Week

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parish
saints

Not long after he became bishop of Rochester in 1979, Bishop Matthew H. Clark presided at a confirmation at Greece's Our Lady of Mercy Church. As young people came forward to receive the sacrament, the bishop enjoyed a brief chat with each of them.

Father William Amann, then Our Lady of Mercy's pastor, said one girl told the bishop that she had chosen Elizabeth Ann — in honor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton — as her confirmed name.

"The bishop said 'Oh, that's beautiful! You know, if I ever start a new parish, I'll call it Elizabeth Ann Seton,'" Father Amann recalled.

In 1982, after Father Amann had been appointed founding pastor of a new parish in Hamlin, he and Bishop Clark were considering various patron saints for it. "I reminded him of what he had said to the girl," Father Amann said.

Sure enough, the parish was named for the first native-born American to become a saint; Elizabeth Ann Seton had been canonized seven years earlier.

Did you ever wonder how your own parish's name came about? According to Father Robert F. McNamara, diocesan historian, parish names most often originate with a bishop, founding pastor or founding parishioners, with the bishop giving final approval.

"It depends largely on the individual parish," Father McNamara said.

The document "Notification Concerning the Title of a Church," issued in 1999 by the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of Sacraments, states that a parish title or name may include any of the following:

The Trinity (Holy Trinity, Webster, is an example); Jesus Christ, under his name (Christ the King, Irondequoit) or according to a mystery of his life (Church of the Epiphany, Sodus, and Church of the Transfiguration, Pittsford); the Holy Spirit (Holy Spirit, Penfield); the Virgin Mary; angel or angels (Holy Angels, Nunda); or a saint or blessed person inscribed in the Roman Martyrology.

Naming a parish for a saint is the most frequently used option, with more than two-thirds of Rochester diocesan parishes named in this way. Many parishes hold special celebrations on their patron's feast day, and that day happens to be Nov. 1 for a church in Lansing, Tompkins County — a church that makes no distinction among patron saints. Its name? All Saints Church.

"You can't go wrong there," Father McNamara quipped.

What's in a name?

The most popular patron saint for Rochester diocesan parishes, by far, is Mary, the mother of Jesus. Numerous parishes simply named St. Mary are spread across the 12 counties, along with such names as St. Mary of the Lake (Watkins Glen and Ontario), St. Mary of the Assumption (Scottsville) and St. Mary Our Mother (Horseheads). Though not specifically mentioned by name, Mary is also the patron of such parishes as Our Lady of Perpetual

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STORY BY MIKE LATONA PHOTOS BY ANDREA DIXON & KARIN VON VOIGTLANDER