



Karin von Voigtlander/Staff photographer
A crowd gathered at St. Michael's Church in Rochester Sept. 8 to watch a procession of emergency personnel.

Mass honors emergency personnel

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Even before Bishop Matthew H. Clark began the opening prayer, the liturgy at St. Michael's Church Sept. 8 had already qualified as a memorable event.

"Lift High the Cross" blared into the streets as the church chimes signaled that it was 7 p.m. — time for the beginning of Mass. A massive American flag hung from the raised ladders of two fire trucks parked near the church entrance. Numerous on-lookers gathered to take in the scene, which just moments earlier had included a fleet of fire, police and ambulance vehicles and workers processing up North Clinton

Avenue on this sultry evening.

Inside, the spacious, stately church was filled nearly to capacity for a liturgy that would last more than two hours. The Mass at St. Michael's was dedicated to all emergency personnel in honor of the first anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

One of the night's most poignant moments came during the offertory: Gifts were brought forward by family members of New York City firefighters, Michael Boyle and Joseph Leavey, who both died in the Sept. 11 attacks. Photographs of Mr. Boyle and Mr. Leavey were then laid under a plaque listing the more than 300-plus emergency workers killed at Ground Zero. Rochester-area fire personnel followed by

laying their hats and other gear next to the photos.

In his homily, Bishop Clark, who presided at the Mass, urged worshippers to avoid creating conditions "that breed resentment and hatred and a desire to strike out." He asked Mass-goers to work toward peace for future generations, and to pay particular attention to the oppressed — those needing food, health care and shelter.

Major Robert Reel, executive director of the Rochester Salvation Army, gave concluding reflections on his visit to Ground Zero in the days following Sept. 11, when he observed "the most horrific crime scene in our history." He implored the con-

Continued on page 10



Catholic Courier

DIocese OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK ■ VOL. 113 NO. 48 ■ THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2002 ■ 75¢ ■ 12 PAGES

Inside This Week



Junior-high kids go to new schools
Area middle schools had closed programs — Page 3



Senior volunteers as interpreter
She helps translate for African refugees — Page 8

Christian band plays at benefit
Cornerstone usually performs at churches — Page 12

Preparing for emergencies

WASHINGTON — Before the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, which killed 168 people, Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City was "just exactly like the majority of the world out there — we didn't have a plan," says assistant executive director Patricia J. Aaron.

The agency still had no written disaster-preparation plan in May 1999, when "the world's largest tornado" — a Category 5 with winds up to 318 miles per hour — hit the state, killing 42 people, injuring 675 and leaving \$1.2 billion in damages.

"It took two huge disasters for us to get a plan," Aaron said. "So now I tell people, 'Sit down and do it, and do it now so you are prepared.'"

As the nation commemorated the first anniversary of the Sept. 11 disasters in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, many Catholic organizations were doing just that, with the help of those who have become experts in the disaster preparedness field through such experiences as what Aaron called her agency's "baptism by fire."

"We didn't have a plan and we did get through it," she said. "But it would have been a whole lot easier with a plan."

Dorothy Grillo, director of Catholic Charities in the Diocese of Charleston, S.C., recounted a similar experience of trial by fire — actually by flood — when Hurricane Floyd hit in September 1999, shortly before Bishop Robert J. Baker was ordained to head the diocese. Floyd, a Category 4 hurricane, caused damages totaling \$460 million in more than a dozen states.

"There is nothing like having your new bishop get caught on the road in the middle of a hurricane evacuation and seeing a Red Cross emergency shelter in action first-hand to bring home the importance of disaster preparedness and response," Grillo said.

Local preparation

Sister of St. Joseph Patricia Carroll, an assistant superintendent in the Diocese of Rochester's Department of Catholic Schools, agrees with the importance of planning for all types of emergencies.

That's why in 1994, when New York required that public, charter and Board of Cooperative Educational Services schools enact emergency management plans, Rochester's Catholic schools followed suit.

Continued on page 10



Reuters/CNS

Franciscan Father Brian Jordan, standing with laborers and emergency workers Oct. 4, blesses a 20-foot tall cross of steel beams that had been recovered from the rubble of the World Trade Center in New York. The cross, erected as a memorial near ground zero, was found two days after the towers fell Sept. 11. The terrorist attack has prompted many Catholic organizations around the country to focus more on preparing emergency management and response plans.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CNS