

Peace group protests war with Iraq

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier



Karin von Voigtlander/Catholic Courier

Pax Christi members and supporters sit on a red fabric cross outside of the Kenneth B. Keating Federal Building in Rochester Oct. 4 to protest the threat of war against Iraq.

JEB BUSH LIFTS STAY OF WOMAN'S EXECUTION

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (CNS)

Florida's Catholic bishops appealed to Gov. Jeb Bush to stay the scheduled Oct. 9 execution of serial killer Aileen Wuornos and commute her sentence to life imprisonment.

They also urged the governor "to begin a review of the entire question of the death penalty" because of the cost, "the recurring question of innocence" of those on death row and "the inconsistency of sentencing."

The appeal followed Bush's decision Oct. 3 to lift a temporary stay of execution he issued Sept. 30 to allow psychiatrists to interview Wuornos after questions were raised about her mental state. They told Bush they had found her competent to be executed.

ARCHDIOCESE RAISING FUNDS FOR WYD COSTS

OTTAWA (CNS) — The Archdiocese of Ottawa has launched a campaign to pay its share of the \$38 million (US\$23.8 million) deficit of World Youth Day 2002 and to eliminate the diocesan debt for the Days in the Diocese.

The goal is to raise nearly \$1.3 million (\$801,000 in U.S. currency) — \$1.1 million (\$691,000 U.S.) to pay the diocesan share of the World Youth Day debt and the remaining \$175,000 (\$109,000 U.S.) for the Days in the Diocese shortfall.

The Priests' Council of the Diocese of Rochester and Pax Christi Rochester have taken separate stands against a pre-emptive strike on Iraq by the United Nations or the United States.

The council's Oct. 7 statement (see page 2) came as Congress was debating a resolution — expected to pass this week — authorizing President George W. Bush to use force against Iraq. Three days earlier, about 20 members and supporters of Pax Christi Rochester, a Catholic peace group, held a demonstration against potential war with Iraq outside the Kenneth B. Keating Federal Building in downtown Rochester Oct. 4. Jan Bezila, Pax Christi Rochester coordinator, said in a statement that "War will indeed crucify the people of Iraq."

Father Charles J. Latus, Priests' Council chairman, said the council's statement was crafted with the input of all diocesan priests, who met in groups of seven to 10 members before the council itself met to discuss the resolution.

The Priests' Council, a consultative body to Bishop Matthew H. Clark, stated that while Saddam Hussein "is a danger to neighbors, an enemy to his own people and a threat to world peace," just-war theory nonetheless precludes attacking him until all other options for dealing with him have been exhausted.

According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, war can be justified only if all of the following conditions are met:

1. The damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community

of nations must be lasting, grave and certain.

2. All other means of putting an end to aggression must have been shown to be impractical and ineffective.

3. The use of force must hold serious prospects of success.

4. The use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evils to be eliminated. The power of modern means of destruction weighs very heavily in evaluating this condition.

During its demonstration at the Federal Building, Pax Christi called for an end to sanctions and for a diplomatic solution to the U.S.-Iraq dispute.

Among the protesters were two diocesan priests and two women religious. The priests were Father Robert Werth, pastor of the Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward and St. Peter and Paul Parish in Rochester, and Father Neil Miller, a retired priest who works with his sibling, Mercy Sister Grace Miller, director of the House of Mercy, an outreach center in Rochester.

Also present at the protest was House of Mercy staff member Rita Lewis, RSM, who held an anti-war banner with Dr. Harry Murray, a professor at Nazareth College in Rochester. Murray, who is active in the Catholic Worker movement, said he was unimpressed by President Bush's case for removing Hussein, and added that even British Prime Minister Tony Blair did not specifically link Iraq to any past terrorist attacks against the United States.

"There's been nothing said about Saddam that we haven't known for the last decade," Murray said.

Ten protesters sat on a red fabric cross outside the building as security guards and Rochester police officers stood by and watched. Mean-



Jan Bezila, coordinator of Pax Christi's local chapter, participates in the Federal Building protest with other Pax Christi members and supporters Oct. 4.

while, other protesters stood near the State Street sidewalk, holding banners or handing anti-war leaflets to passersby. Officers said no one would be arrested because the protesters were not blocking the path of pedestrians entering the building.

Among other protesters sitting on the fabric cross was Judith Kiehl, pastoral associate of Holy Trinity Parish in Webster, who held a sign proclaiming, "No More Innocent Death."

"A word has to be spoken to the leaders of our country and the people of our country," she said. "This event is a prophetic word that is asking our people to turn away from violence and especially to consider the suffering people of Iraq who we have been bombing for the last 10 years."

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