

CHURCH IN KENYA CALLS FOR NEW INQUIRY

NAIROBI, Kenya (CNS) — The Catholic Church in Kenya has reiterated its call for the government to reopen its investigation into the death of U.S. Mill Hill Father John Kaiser who was shot and killed in 2000.

Archbishop Giovanni Tonucci, papal nuncio to Kenya, said during a March 19 Mass in Nairobi that Father Kaiser suffered death "twice" — from the people who killed him and from those who were hiding what happened to him. The archbishop said Kenya's government should "forget about the theory in which they do not believe more than we do" — that Father Kaiser committed suicide and "start working toward bringing out the truth of what happened," reported Kenya's Daily Nation newspaper.

PRIEST SAYS RUSSIA 'BLACKLISTS' CLERGY

WARSAW, Poland (CNS) — A Catholic priest who was ordered to leave Russia said Catholic and Protestant clergy have been blacklisted from returning.

"The existence of the blacklist explains why the five priests expelled before me haven't come back," said Polish-born Father Bronislaw Czaphicki. "But I haven't been expelled myself, just refused permanent stay."

Father Czaphicki returned to Poland's Archdiocese of Katowice after being ordered to leave his parish in Pushkin.

POPE BEATIFIES FIVE WHO SERVED POOR

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope John Paul II beatified five persons March 23 who spent their lives caring for the poor and exploited.

Laszlo Barthany, Strassmann, Hungarian-born physician and father of 13; **Spanish Sister Juana Maria Condasa Llach**, founder of the Congregation of the Handmaids of the Immaculate Conception, Protectress of Workers; **Spanish Sister Dolores Rodriguez Sopena**, founder of the Sopena Catechetical Institute, Sopena Lay Movement and Sopena Social and Cultural Work; **Swiss-born Sister Maria Caridad Brader**, founder of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary Immaculate; and **French Father Pierre Bonhomme**, founder of the Sisters of Our Lady of Calvary.

War brings tears, prayers

Bishop, congregations express their positions

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

Catholics in the Diocese of Rochester responded to the start of war on Iraq last week with prayers, patriotic sentiment and condemnation.

Two prominent congregations of women religious in the diocese, the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of St. Joseph, both released statements in opposition to the war.

The Mercy statement was issued March 18 on behalf of Mercy sisters throughout the Americas and called on the United States to "use nonviolent means to contain and decrease any potential harm Iraq may pose."

The Sisters of St. Joseph of Rochester also released a March 24 statement condemning the war.

"We believe the effort to resolve this conflict through diplomatic means was prematurely abandoned and that war is never the answer," the sisters' statement read. "We grieve all the lives which will be lost to this war, those of our Iraqi brothers and sisters and those of the armed forces."

After war began the evening of March 19, Bishop Matthew H. Clark issued a statement expressing grave concern that "this military action has moral implications that will haunt us for years." (See page 2 for the text of the statement.)

"While a decisive victory by our military forces seems certain, I am convinced of the truth of Pope John Paul II's recent reminder that 'war is always a defeat for humanity,'" the bishop wrote. In his statement, the bishop also encouraged parish leaders to keep the doors of their churches open "for all to gather to pray for peace."

Even before the bishop's statement, St. Michael's Church in Rochester decided to open its doors for prayer during the war, according to Mary Mitrano, who serves on the parish's English-language liturgy committee. The parish has both Spanish-speaking and English-speaking members.

"We kind of felt because St. Michael's was so centrally located and because people pass by here on the way home from work to open the church so people could pray," she said.

The church will be open from 6 to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday, she said. A registry has been made available to families of military personnel who wish to list the names of



Rebecca Gosselin/Catholic Courier

Protesters march around the Liberty Pole in downtown Rochester March 21 to demonstrate against the war in Iraq, spilling over into the streets as they walked to the Federal Building.

loved ones in military service, she said, adding that the parish's youth-group members plan on writing to the military personnel.

Tears welled up in the eyes of St. Michael's parishioner Belén Colón, whose son, Gabriel Vazquez Jr., is stationed on a naval ship somewhere near Kuwait.

"I'm for peace," she said as she stood leaning against a pew in St. Michael's on the evening of March 21. "I respect my son's decision, but I'm against war."

Colón noted she had come to St. Michael's that evening with her grandson, who had been demonstrating against the Iraq war only hours before in downtown Rochester. Colón said she had received an e-mail message from her son in the Navy, informing her that "he is OK, and to thank everyone for praying." She added that she was praying for Americans like her son and for the people of Iraq as well.

"When we have services like this, it gives us comfort," she said.

Another St. Michael's parishioner, Maria Vega, is waiting to hear if her brother, an Army Reservist, may be sent to the Middle East soon. Vega and her parents visited him at Fort Dix, N.J., last weekend, and said it was very hard to say goodbye. Like Colón, Vega said she did not support the war, but added that she also did not spend any time discussing it with her brother, Jesus Vega.

She added that her parents have been saying the rosary every night, and that the war had tested her faith.

"It's difficult at times because I feel, where's God when we need

him?" she said. "Why would he allow us to go to war?"

Yet Vega said she thinks there's something "ironic" in the fact the nation went to war during Lent, a time of sacrifice. Like Jesus fasting in the desert for 40 days, she said, American soldiers are enduring the desert war on behalf of those of us back home. Then again, she said, war is not the type of sacrifice she thinks God wants.

"Here we are in a war fighting each other and killing each other and that's not close to God," she said.

Doris Beaupré, whose son, Rex Black, is in the Air Force, attended a service for the families of military personnel at Sacred Heart Cathedral on the evening of March 18. The cathedral is holding such services at 7 p.m. each Tuesday during Lent. She said that while she didn't want a war, she supported the war and disliked Saddam Hussein.

"He thinks we're weak, and I don't think that's right," she said. "I think we've got to show him," she added, clenching her fist.

Beaupré added that she values the cathedral services.

"I think when you gather with another group of people who are in the same boat, you get a little community going," she said.

On that note, Mitrano said opening churches to prayer allows people with varying opinions about the war to unite in concern for their loved ones.

"It's an opportunity to pray in some unified way instead of being on opposite sides of the political issue," she said.