

# Catholic Courier

DIOCESE OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK

VOL. 114 NO. 25

THURSDAY, APRIL 3, 2003

75¢

16 PAGES

## Inside



### Assembly OKs cloning for medical purposes

Catholic conference calls bill a 'moral outrage' — Page 3



### Popular interfaith duo appears in Rochester

'God Squad' talks about war, religion — Page 4

### Partial-birth abortion bill a step closer to vote

House committee OKs ban without changes — Page 5

### Kids nationwide show support for U.S. troops

Send rosaries, cards to soldiers in Iraq — Page 6

### Multiparish ministries cover many extra bases

Youth ministers coordinate by region — Page 11



An Iraqi girl escapes fighting in the city of Basra March 30. British troops continued to surround the city, approaching cautiously to avoid fighting in heavily populated areas of Iraq's second-largest city.

## Pope urges prayers for peace

VATICAN CITY — As the toll of death and destruction mounted during the second week of war in Iraq, Pope John Paul II repeatedly prayed for peace and said the conflict must not be allowed to become a "religious catastrophe."

The pope, who strongly opposed an attack on Iraq, made the comments as photos of civilian victims in Iraq provoked sadness and indignation in much of the world, especially Muslim countries.

Meanwhile, some church leaders stepped up criticism of the war effort led by U.S.

and British troops, as Catholics tried to wrestle with the moral issues involved. Many in the United States were distressed at the loss of life on both sides, including four U.S. soldiers killed by an Iraqi suicide bomber at a military checkpoint.

Speaking at a noon blessing from his apartment window above St. Peter's Square March 30, the pope said the world was experiencing a moment in which "painful armed conflicts are threatening humanity's hope in a better future."

He offered a special prayer

to Mary for war victims and especially for her intercession for peace in Iraq.

The day before, addressing bishops from predominantly Muslim Indonesia, the pope expressed deep concern about the interreligious impact of the war in Iraq.

"War must never be allowed to divide world religions. I encourage you to take this unsettling moment as an occasion to work together, as brothers committed to peace, with your own people, with those of other religious beliefs and with all men and women of good will in order to ensure

understanding, cooperation and solidarity," he said.

"Let us not permit a human tragedy also to become a religious catastrophe," he said.

At his weekly general audience March 26, the pope said his heart was weighed down by reports coming out of Iraq, and he urged Catholics to continue praying the rosary for peace.

On March 25, the pontiff sent a message to a group of international military chaplains meeting in Rome. He encouraged chaplains to educate soldiers in the ethical values

Continued on page 10

Story and photos by Catholic News Service

