

Kids show their support of troops

WASHINGTON (CNS) — When the eighth-grade religion class at Our Lady of Victory School in Arbutus, Md., prays for military troops in Iraq, they have someone particular in mind: the father of a classmate who is on the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt in the Persian Gulf.

Thirteen-year-old Katie Damiano has not been able to communicate with her father, and all she wants is for him to return safely to his family, which includes her 8-month-old brother.

Although the war has not hit quite so close to home for the other students in Joan Hargadon's religion class, it has had an impact on all of them in some way.

They have been praying for relatives and family friends as well as their science teacher, Jeff Hoffman, a meteorologist who was called to active duty in early March.

Hargadon, who has taught for 17 years at Our Lady of Victory, knows that her students are troubled and sometimes confused about the war and the threat of terrorism at home.

"I have sensed anxiety and stress and we did talk about things they can do to alleviate that," she told *The*

Catholic Review, newspaper of the Baltimore Archdiocese.

As one way to minimize students' anxiety, Our Lady of Victory's principal has forbidden the classes to watch live television news.

Limiting television news is key to reducing children's fears, according to an Illinois psychologist.

Mary Vandendorpe, a developmental psychologist and chair of the Lewis University Psychology Department in Romeoville, Ill., suggested that parents turn off the television coverage of the war and discuss the crisis with their children, first finding out what the children know and then talking about it.

Teen-agers, she said, are more likely to ponder the logical inconsistencies in war and to talk about it. She also said older students should be encouraged to take this time to do something positive for others by helping out at shelters, food pantries or other service centers.

Many Catholic schools have been doing things to show support for the deployed U.S. troops with letters, cards or care packages.

Seventh-graders at St. Ferdinand School in Florissant, Mo., are making military rosaries — which are longer and can be worn around the neck — for servicemen and women.

Student Sean Lischke came up with the rosary idea; it began as a mission project and grew into an effort for members of the armed forces. The students, working with Our Lady's Rosary Makers, an international organization, had an initial goal of 1,360 rosaries but they raised enough money for supplies and postage to make up to 2,500 rosaries. The seventh-graders enlisted the help of the whole student body and faculty members.

At St. Timothy School in Affton, Mo., students sent 13 boxes of toiletries, snacks, batteries and other items to the 3rd and 7th Marine Divisions in Kuwait, and students at St.



Owen Sweeney III/CNS

Lindsey Helms (left) and Katie Damiano, eighth-grade students at Our Lady of Victory School in Arbutus, Md., look at photos sent by Damiano's father stationed on the USS Theodore Roosevelt in the Persian Gulf.

Peter School in St. Charles have collected items and sent letters of thanks to servicemen and women in Kuwait, while computer class students are e-mailing messages to service members in Iraq.

A group of girls who belong to the Girls for Christ Club at Immaculate Conception Parish in Becker, Minn., have been working on a project called "Smiles to Go," sending 30 original greeting cards to 30 U.S. troops deployed in the Middle East, including Joshua Vogel, a cousin of one of the girls in the parish club.

Vogel is a Navy helicopter crew chief providing support for the aircraft carrier, the USS Abraham Lincoln, and its battle group in the Persian Gulf. His "Black Knights" crew and Sea Hawk helicopters conduct search and rescue missions if any of the carrier's planes go down or a member of the carrier's personnel falls overboard.

Contributing to this story were Jennifer Williams in Baltimore, Kathrynne Skonicki in Romeoville and Barbara Watkins in St. Louis.

Sister Mary Patrice Hussey, RSM

Mercy Sister Mary Patrice Hussey, 92, died March 1, 2003, at the Sisters of Mercy Motherhouse in Brighton.

Born Margaret Hussey, she entered the Sisters of Mercy from St. Vincent DePaul Parish in Corning, N.Y., in 1928, professing her final vows in 1934. She attend Mercy High School in Rochester and obtained her certificate in teaching from Nazareth Normal School in 1938.

Sister Hussey taught at Holy Cross, St. Andrew's, St. Mary's, St. Thomas, St. John's and St. Rita's schools in Rochester; St. Vincent's and St. Mary's schools in Corning; St. Cecilia School in Elmira; and St. Ann School in Hornell. She retired in 1980, remaining in Hornell until she moved to the motherhouse in 1995.

She is survived by her sister, Katherine Hussey Sprague of North Carolina; her sister-in-law, Ruth Hussey; nieces, nephew, grandnieces and grandnephews; and her sisters in the congregation.

Her funeral liturgy was celebrated at the motherhouse chapel on March 5 by Father Celestine Obi, followed by burial in St. Mary's Cemetery in Corning. Memorials may be made to the Sisters of Mercy, 1437 Blossom Road, Rochester, NY 14610.

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