

Isabel leaves a wide trail of damage

WASHINGTON (CNS) — From the battered roof and flooded basement of St. Anne Church on the Albemarle Sound in Edenton, N.C., to the flooded Mother Seton Academy in the Fells Point area of Baltimore, numerous church properties were damaged by Hurricane Isabel as it swept across mid-Atlantic states Sept. 18 and 19.

By Sept. 22, 34 deaths were attributed to the storm and its aftermath. Utility crews borrowed from across the country were working to restore power to the 3.5 million customers who lost it from North Carolina to Pennsylvania.

Father Roch Drozdzik, pastor of St. Anne Church in Edenton, said his house was flooded and his church was damaged by Hurricane Isabel.

He and his parishioners had downed trees, no power, roads closed, and a curfew from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m.

In Maryland, Daughter of Charity Sister Mary Bader, principal of Mother Seton Academy, said there was about a foot of water in the basement of the school, which serves children from low-income families.

Father James Kauffmann, pastor of St. Benedict Church in Richmond, Va., said he and parishioners at daily Mass the afternoon before the hurricane made landfall asked the Blessed Mother to watch over the church "and keep it under her protection during the storm." They sang "Salve Regina" as the recessional hymn.

In the Washington area, hundreds

of thousands of federal government workers were told to stay home two days in a row — the first day as Isabel swept into the region and the second day as emergency crews struggled to remove downed trees, restore electricity and gear up other normal operations.

By Sept. 22, 300,000 electric customers in Washington, Northern Virginia and central Maryland still had no power. Some Virginia residents who had been under orders to boil their water because of possible contamination were allowed to stop.

In the Archdiocese of Washington, which includes several Maryland counties, some of the worst damage from Isabel was around North Beach on the Chesapeake Bay. St. Anthony's Parish in North Beach is

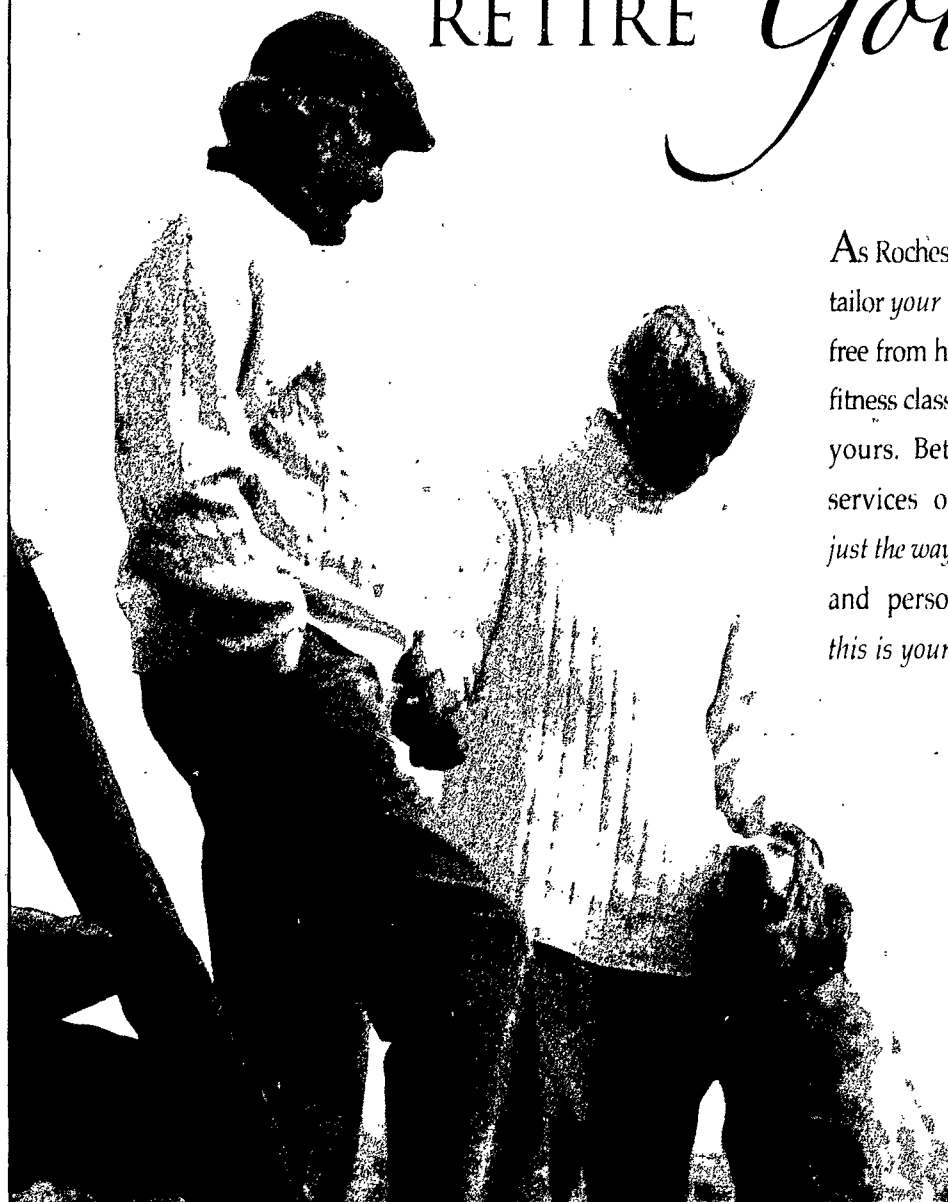
among churches that opened their doors to help feed people whose homes were damaged or who lacked electricity.

Jesus the Good Shepherd Parish, also near the Chesapeake Bay, in Dunkirk, Md., began serving meals to anyone who needed them.

Farther north, in the Baltimore Archdiocese, at the Beans and Breads Outreach Center in Fells Point, the staff and volunteers from the adjacent Frederic Ozanam House tried their best to serve meals despite having no electricity.

Contributing to this story were Richard Szczepanowski in Washington, Jennifer Williams in Baltimore, John Strange in Raleigh and Steve Neill in Richmond.

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