

# Prayer Keeps Ecumenical Moment Alive

BY LINDA BUSETTI

A small congregation chanted evening prayers on Wednesday, May 23, as about 40 Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant clergy processed down the aisle of Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn Heights.

The diocese hosted its annual ecumenical Vespers service at which Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio, retired Bishop Thomas V. Daily and Auxiliary Bishop Octavio Cisneros were joined by clergy from many Orthodox and Protestant churches.

Participants included Cor-Bishop Michael Thomas; Archimandrite John Faraj of Virgin Mary Melkite Church, Brooklyn; Archimandrite Eugene Papas of the Three Hierarchs Greek Orthodox Church, Brooklyn; Bishop Paul Chomnycky, O.S.B.M., of the Eparchy of Stamford; the Rev. Charles L'Hierux of Queens; as well as representatives of St. Nicholas Nectarius Greek Orthodox Church and the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island.

Msgr. Guy Massie, chair of the diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs Office, coordinated the service.

Bishop Gregory Mansour, who leads the Maronite Diocese of St. Maron in Brooklyn, was the homilist. He recalled that last December many of the same clergy, as well as Muslims and Jews, had gathered for an interfaith prayer service for the people of war-torn Lebanon. Five months later, "Lebanon is again in crisis," he said, referring to the recent fighting between the Lebanese Army and Fatah al Islam, a militant Palestinian group, in the Nahr al Bared refugee camp.

"On that evening a common refrain was heard, 'It is good to be here.' (Mk 9:5) These words, spoken by Peter himself, are quite familiar to us and also define our prayer tonight," Bishop Mansour said.

"Between the Resurrection and Pentecost (which we celebrate together) we come to pray. We repent and lament that we do not pray and work together often enough. It is easier for us to stay within our own communities. We know our way around there; it is comfortable for us. But this is not acceptable to the One who prayed to His Father just before he died and was raised up..."

Bishop Mansour went on to say that each Christian group has its own "strength and beauty" - the "Catholic Communion of Churches" is in "her universality, her unity with the pope in Rome and in the order, discipline and uniformity of her law"; for the orthodox churches it is "found in their love for Sacred Tradition, their Synodal (team) government of the apostolic college of bishops, and in the epikia principle which allows bishops to accommodate to human need and weakness"; and for the "Protestant ecclesial communities," it is "in their fervent love for the Scriptures, their evangelical zeal, their flexibility, and their desire to listen to the work and movement of the Holy Spirit to witness Christ in every circumstance of life and society."

Bishop Mansour continued that the



LINDA BUSETTI PHOTOS

**ECUMENICAL GATHERING:** Clergy from Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches came together for an ecumenical Vespers service at Our Lady of Lebanon Cathedral, Brooklyn Heights, on May 23. Among them were retired Bishop Thomas Daily, above center; Bishop Gregory Mansour, at right below, of the Maronite Diocese in Brooklyn, who gave the homily; and at left, Auxiliary Bishop Octavio Cisneros and Archimandrite Eugene Papas.



virtue of humility is needed for the Christian churches to recognize, "that we are missing something, perhaps missing someone!... for us, it is the unified Church, fully herself, one, holy, catholic and apostolic; one flock with all her shepherds united in full communion. This is the true image of the Body of Christ."

The bishop concluded, "If we cannot enter into an official theological dialogue, which is important, if we cannot work together in ecumenical service

projects, which are also important, if we cannot further the common date for Easter or the receiving of the one cup and one loaf, or the hierarchical unity of all Christians, which are all important, we at least can love one another. A gathering like this one helps us do just that."



## Bishop Places Retired Pastor from Queens on an Administrative Leave

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio of the Diocese of Brooklyn has placed a retired Queens pastor on administrative leave from exercising priestly ministry after accepting a finding from the Diocesan Review Board that sufficient evidence existed of sexual abuse of minors three decades ago.

The bishop announced his decision on the status of Msgr. Nicholas J. Capua, who was the pastor of St. Luke's Church, Whitestone, from 1983 until 2005, in a letter read to parishioners there by Msgr. Sean G. Ogle, the Territorial Vicar for the Queens North Vicariate, at Masses on the weekend of May 26-27.

As a priest on administrative leave, Msgr. Capua may not present himself as a priest, celebrate Mass publicly or administer the sacraments, the letter said.

He is permitted to offer Mass privately.

Bishop DiMarzio said the diocese will submit documentation on the matter to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the Vatican for review and for "direction on further action it may wish us to take."

The letter said the allegations of inappropriate behavior referred to a time when Msgr. Capua was assigned to another parish of the diocese. He has denied the allegations.

In his letter, the Bishop apologized to the persons who made the allegations "for the emotional suffering... endured over these many years." He said "even the passage of time has not dimmed their memory of a difficult experience encountered at early stages in their lives."

Bishop DiMarzio's letter, which was read in Italian at the parish's Mass in Italian, asked the parishioners of St. Luke's to pray for the well-being of those who presented the allegations.

The bishop also asked for prayers for the former pastor, expressing the hope that celebrating the Eucharist privately "will sustain him in what is clearly a painful period in his life" and asking parishioners "to remember the good works" he performed in more than 50 years as a priest.

As the group that investigates allegations of sexual abuse of minors by clergy, the Diocesan Review Board consists of eight members "of outstanding integrity and

Continued on page 9

## Possibilities in Iraq



**TS CATHOLIC PRESS:** Following opening Catholic Media Convention, Bishop DiMarzio elski, editor of *The St. Louis Review*, while or of the Catholic Virginian (Richmond) say hello. In background, Archbishop John r convention-goers.



**BY front and center at breakfast meet- lie News Service.**

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The continuing rumors that the Vatican is still hiding something puzzle Cardinal Bertone and, he said, they irritated Sister Lucia, who died in February 2005 at the age of 97.

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"Clearing up the question was a pastoral concern," he said.

Pope Benedict's letter, written in late February, reflects that concern.

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in honor of

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June 5-13, 2007

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New York NY 10012 Phone 212-777-2755

[www.stanthonyinc.org](http://www.stanthonyinc.org)

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Mass Schedule: 8 AM and 5 PM

Novena Prayers, Blessing and Veneration

1 PM - Movie on the Life of St. Anthony

in Social Hall

1:15 PM Italian Food Available

Confessions: 4-5 PM

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of the relic after each Mass.

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## ilities in Iraq



TOM LOUISIANA PHOTO

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