

TENDERLOIN RELIGIOUS LEADERS DENOUNCE WAR

Father Louis Vitale

PASTOR OF ST. BONIFACE

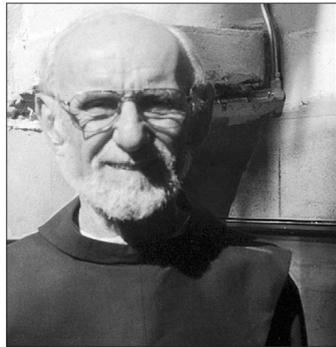


PHOTO BY ERIC ROBERTSON

WE should not go to war because there is no reason to go to war. There is no justification. So any war would be unjust and even immoral. We have not been able to document that they have weapons of mass destruction, which is what we are claiming, much less that they are prepared to use them — and even much less than that they would use them in some way that would allow us to act in our defense. So all of the really critical conditions for a just war are not met. I'm not very comfortable with a just war anyway, but certainly not one that has been declared by just about all the religious bodies in the world as being an unjust war. We have not brought out, as they say, the smoking gun. We have not uncovered weapons of mass destruction, whereas we are the largest holders of mass destruction in the world. So we are very hypocritical to be out looking around for some evidence when we are the ones who the whole world is frightened of.

The Rev. Glenda Hope

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF S.F. NETWORK MINISTRIES



PHOTO BY KAREN OBERDORFER

DO not think there is justification for invasion and I wish people would stop talking about "pre-emptive strike" and start using the term invasion, because that's what it is. If we go ahead with that, there will be waves of terrorism that ... I don't think there's really many ways to guard against. All this stuff about preparing, and color coding and all that is fear mongering and a way to keep the American people focused on Sept. 11. Feeling that if we do these things it will somehow protect us is just baloney. I'm 66 and I can remember being taught that when you see the flash, cover your eyes and get under your desk. The pure monetary costs of an invasion are just unbelievable to me, they're just astronomical. Now add on what Turkey wants, and it's just going to continue. Meanwhile, we've got people dying on the street, we have old people having to choose between heat and medication; we could just multiply with examples. Just look at the city's budget! I'm horrified, we're eliminating dental care for our homeless adults or for poor adults, we're eliminating the Homeless Death Prevention Team, laying off people at San Francisco General. It's just crazy. ...

There's just no justification for invading that I can see. If there were, if it were so clear, I don't think we would have the other countries standing against us, even countries that are our historic allies. If we co-existed with the Soviet Union for so long, knowing the level of nuclear weaponry that it had, why is Iraq different? Do we think Hussein is crazier than Khrushchev, you know? Come on! If we're really this concerned about having these weapons then what about North Korea? ...

[To Bush she says:] You're going down a crazy person's path, you're inviting violence on a scale that we've never known before. You claim to be a Christian like I am, I can't imagine why you're doing this. There are other ways to deal with menace in the world, and I don't doubt that Hussein could be a menace, but at the moment I think you're the bigger menace.

If you want to know some things about terror come spend a week with us. Let's walk through the Tenderloin and you can go to other cities; for that matter, you don't have to go any farther than Washington, D.C., to see how the people of this country are suffering. ... The cost of this war is just going to make it much worse. We think we have a homeless problem now? This is just money coming out of the lives of people, out of their houses, out of their food, out of their health care; it's just surreal. We're using our resources all wrong. We're putting them into weapons and not into healing.

I've lived a long time, I've been politically active since 21 and I've just never seen anything like this or felt it. Not even Vietnam.

THAT the U.S. will invade Iraq is now not only possible but probable — not if, but when. Soon. At least if President Bush has his say in the matter. He has preached war and terror until they have become like tenets of a weird religion. Blessed be the peacemaker even if you have to start a war to do it. He doesn't need to prove that Saddam Hussein is hiding weapons of mass destruction; he simply has to say it's so. As with other religions' mysteries of faith, in which there is no tangible evidence, we are asked simply to believe. No proof that the enemy really is the enemy. No smoking gun. Not necessary, not with a whole lot of oil and control of the entire Mideast's water supply at stake.

As the war drums beat louder, *The Extra* wanted to hear what some moral voices of reason had to say. We asked religious leaders in the Tenderloin: What is the most important reason to not support this war with Iraq? This is what they said.

RELIGIOUS LEADERS INTERVIEWED BY ERIC ROBERTSON, KAREN OBERDORFER AND ED BOWERS



PHOTO BY KAREN OBERDORFER

Souleiman Ghali

PRESIDENT OF THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO



PHOTO BY KAREN OBERDORFER

THE majority of the Muslims in this city and in this country do not support a military solution to the Iraqi problems, but a very important point needs to be kept in mind: That does not necessarily mean that we support Saddam Hussein. There is a consensus that Saddam Hussein is a terrible, evil person, and there's no doubt about that.

But the issue is: The Iraqi people have suffered a lot and they're going to be the main victims of this war, and ... we're not just talking about Iraqis dying, also our friends and brothers in this country, our neighbors, fellow American soldiers are going to go there and die. And we don't feel they should die for any reason unless we really, really see this country is threatened by an imminent attack on it ...

There are a lot of verses in the Koran emphasizing conflict resolution, peaceful resolutions. In a verse, God says that the reason he made us so different in tribes and nations and different languages is so you may get to know each other ... and the best amongst you is the most righteous. ... Nobody's superior or above others ...

We can't, as the human race, we can't waste our resources on wars while [they are] desperately needed for disease cures, for medicine, immunization for kids. People don't have clean water, yet we're going to spend God knows how many dollars, I don't know, two trillion, God knows how much, on what? On a war ... how is that going to make the world better? How is it going to improve our lives? How is it going to help the environment, education, schools? I can't support it. I can't believe that this is a good solution. Let the inspections work. Let's find out what this guy has and if he does have any ability to threaten this country, then let's see the evidence and let's deal with it — let the Security Council deal with it.

War theme opens new photo gallery

Images from 'America's Second Class Veterans' and 'Vietnam Inc.'

801 HOWARD ST.

BY WILLIAM CRAIN

AN old man walks down a filthy San Francisco street. The creases on his face attest to years of hard work and hard times, yet from just this one gritty black-and-white photograph, one can see that this is a man of pride and dignity. A note from the photographer, Rick Rocamora, explains: The man is a World War II veteran named Ernesto Fajardo.

Rocamora tells us that the year after the photo was taken, Fajardo returned home to the Philippines to die, so that he could be honored with a hero's funeral, complete with marching band. Why couldn't Fajardo have gotten that honor in the United States? Because he was Filipino.

Fajardo was one of an estimated 100,000 Filipinos who fought alongside American troops against Japanese invaders, but because of a 1946 law these Filipino veterans are entitled to only half the benefits available to other veterans. Rocamora examines this situation in "America's Second Class Veterans," a show at the San Francisco Exposure Gallery, a new photography gallery at Woolf House, 801 Howard St.

The show is the opening act for the gallery's first full-scale exhibit, "Vietnam Inc.," on March 22, featuring photographs by Philip Jones Griffiths of Magnum Photos.

Exposure Gallery will be mounting themed shows, says Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Kim Komenich, now at the Chronicle, who is opening the gallery with



PHOTO BY RICK ROCAMORA

This image from the show is of Menardo Devina, a WWII veteran from the Philippines, at home.

Rocamora. The first theme is "War" so Rocamora's "Second-Class Veterans" is an appropriate warmup.

Rocamora, who emigrated from the Philippines in 1972, has long taken an activist approach to photojournalism, documenting topics such as the Muslim experience in America, the reliance of Silicon Valley upon Indian immigrants and the plight of children in Philippine jails. While Rocamora's notes make his political agenda clear, his photographs would be powerful even without the context of the Filipino veterans' unequal status. In "America's Second Class Veterans," one image features a man who looks even more weather-beaten than Fajardo. He tells Rocamora that

when he came to the United States, he was kept in chains and fed dog food by a man who stole his Social Security checks. (Rocamora helped free several Filipino immigrants who were similarly abused.) This photograph, like many of the others, conveys a universal fear: growing old and frail and vulnerable. One subject tells Rocamora, "We can solve all our problems in America except loneliness."

San Francisco Exposure Gallery will be open Thursdays through Saturdays, noon-5 p.m., starting March 22, when "Vietnam Inc." opens. "America's Second-Class Veterans" can be viewed by appointment only by calling Woolf House reception at 981-2165. ■



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Sister Carmen

FAITHFUL FOOLS STREET MINISTRY

OUR challenge is to reduce suffering in the world. Fools believe one simple act of compassion can feed a stranger or end a war.



PHOTO BY LENNY LIMJOCO

Sister Bernie Galvin

RELIGIOUS WITNESS WITH THE HOMELESS

THE utter brutality of Bush's war plans is in total violation of the very nature of humanity and in absolute defiance of the mandate of every faith tradition that we seek peace and justice in this world.

And how blasphemous that this administration is moving in the direction of an unjust war under the guise of the "will of Almighty God."