

Archbishop Kassab of Iraq

To speak on the desperate struggle of the Iraqi people

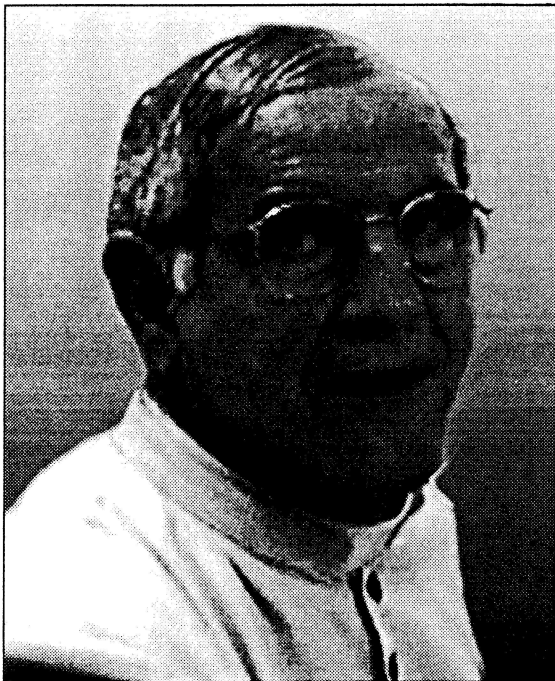
With Guest Speakers

Richard Becker

Organizer,
International Action Center

Michelle Kimball

Fellowship of
Reconciliation



Archbishop Gabriel Kassab, 60, of the Chaldean Catholic Church, one of the oldest branches of the Catholic church, and established in Iraq since the fourth century, wrote an appeal to the religious community in the United States to work to end the sanctions on Iraq. He stated: "Epidemics rage, taking away infants and the sick by the thousands. Those children who survive disease succumb to malnutrition, which stunts their physical and mental development. Our situation is unbearable...!"

"We appeal to people of conscience to work to end the blockade of Iraq. Let it be known that Resolution 986 (oil - for-food) has served to divert world attention from the tragedy while aggravating it." All four Catholic Bishops in Baghdad joined Kassab and Mar Giwargis Sliwa, Archbishop, Church of the East, in signing the following petition:

"We appeal to all Catholics and to all Christians [and people of conscience] in America and the world. The sanctions are killing our people, our children, the ones [God] has given us to protect. They are killing our beloved Muslim

brothers and sisters. They strike at our poor and our sick most of all. In the name of God's people we ask you: tell your government to end the sanctions against the Iraqi people. End the seven years of war against Iraq." (Christmas 1997)

Archbishop Kassab, who has lived in Iraq nearly all his life, was ordained in 1961. Since that time he has headed international committees on religious education. He has been called "the Oscar Romero of Iraq" – a title he would deny, but one which Catholic Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit emphatically confirms: "He lives in a simple fashion among the people and is doing everything in his power to alleviate the suffering of Iraqis and to awaken people in this country to their plight."

August 24, 7:00 pm

Unitarian Church Parish Hall

call 569-3738 for more info

IRAQ Archbishop to Visit Santa Barbara

Appeals to American people to help end sanctions

One and a half million innocent people have died from
seven year U.S. siege on IRAQ



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"Epidemics rage, taking away infants and the sick by the thousands. Those children who survive disease succumb to malnutrition, which stunts their physical and mental development. Our situation is unbearable..."

Gabriel Kassab, 60, Archbishop of Iraq's southern city of Basra, will be visiting Santa Barbara. He will offer a first hand account of the horrible conditions the Iraqi people continue to endure, thanks to the barbaric and unjust siege imposed on their country by the U.S. for the past seven years. The U.S. savagely bombed Iraq's infrastructure during the Gulf war, targeting hospitals, churches, schools, electric, water purification, and pharmaceutical plants, residences, historic sites, civilian shelters, oil refineries, bridges ...

Whatever the intent of these sanctions, the means violates the most basic tenants of Christian moral theology. Moreover, they violate international law by targeting civilians and the infrastructure necessary for their existence. "It is prohibited to attack, destroy, remove or render useless objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population such as food, livestock, agricultural areas and drinking water installations." (Art. 48, Geneva Conventions).

Some of the oldest religious communities in the world are in Iraq, the birthplace of Abraham. All Christians, Muslims and Jews can trace their heritage here, yet there is little awareness among Christians in the West that these people need our help. The U.S. blockade has made normal life impossible, preventing the entry into Iraq of anything except small quantities of certain food items, not enough to prevent starvation. This is a time when all humans need to rally to the support of fellow humans in Iraq.

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**Featuring video of Michelle Kimball's
much-publicized recent trip to IRAQ**



BEST BETS

FREE Event, Monday, August 24, 7:00 p.m.,
Unitarian Church Parish Hall, 1535 Santa Barbara Street
(corner of Santa Barbara Street & Arrellaga)

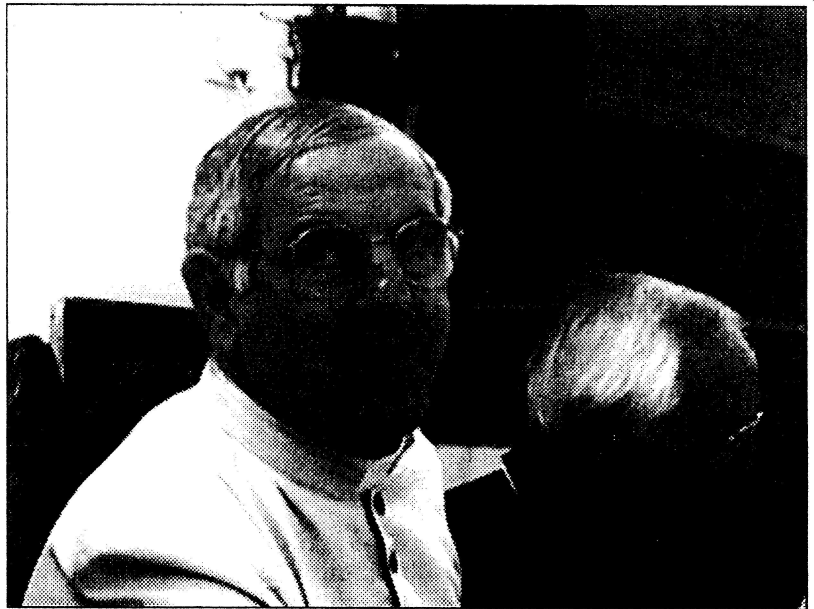
Call 562-8735 or 569-3738

Sponsored by: Unitarian Church, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, & other groups

best bet **SPEAKER**

A PLEA FOR PROSPERITY:

Catholic Archbishop Gabriel Kassab of Basra, Iraq comes to Santa Barbara to speak on the circumstances that have afflicted the Iraqi people in the wake of the 1991 Gulf War, especially the desperate struggle they have faced as a consequence of the UN Security Council sanctions. Kassab has written an appeal to the religious community in the United States to work to end sanctions against Iraq and is well-respected in his own country for his involvement in the drive for prosperity and peace. Also scheduled to attend Monday are Michelle Kimball, local peace



activist and founder of the Santa Barbara Peace Coalition, and Richard Becker, a long-time organizer of the International Action Center, who will present video documentary on the horrific conditions and loss of life since the embargo began in 1990.

■ **CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP GABRIEL KASSAB:** Monday, August 24, 7 p.m. Santa Barbara Unitarian Church, Parish Hall. Free. Call 569-3738.

Local

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS / FRIDAY, AUGUST 21, 1998

Basra archbishop to speak

NEWS-PRESS STAFF REPORT

Gabriel Kassab, the Catholic Archbishop of Basra, will speak in Santa Barbara on Monday about Iraqi suffering as a result of the sanctions imposed on his country in 1990 by the United Nations.

Kassab was invited to speak by local resident Michelle Kimball when she visited Iraq in May with a delegation of religious leaders, medical professionals and anti-war activists.

The archbishop will describe Iraq's current conditions, including joblessness, contaminated water, malnutrition and a lack of medicine. More than 1.5 million people — half of them children — have died there since the embargo began, according to UN agencies.

Kassab will speak at 7 p.m. at the Unitarian Church. Members of the Santa Barbara Peace Coalition and International Action Center will also talk and screen a documentary on the subject.

A MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

From Archbishop Gabriel Kassab of Basrah, Iraq

Greetings to you from Basrah, Iraq!

Greetings to you from Ur, City of Abraham!

Greetings to you from the peaceful, helpless people of southern Iraq!

Greetings to you from a land blessed by God with natural beauty, wealth and strategic location, which unfortunately made it a target in two destructive wars: the Iran-Iraq war of 1980 to 1988 and the Gulf war in 1991.

This great land was subjected to mass destruction of its civilisation as well as its people, especially in the southern part of the country, Al-Basrah, which was the centre of all attacks and wars. From here, I stand before you as an eye witness to what happened to this area, the southern part of the country, or what we refer to as Al-Basrah. I am not going to elaborate on what happened to the area in the Iraq-Iran war where I witnessed more than four hundred bombs fall on this city in one day. But I will tell you today about what I have been witnessing for the past six years as Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Al-Basrah. Due to the embargo, the sanctions, the life of the whole city has been paralysed. Malnutrition due to scarcity of food has become a major reason for mental and physical retardation, especially for small children and new-borns.

- Scarcity of medication has become a direct cause for a dramatic increase in the number of chronic diseases and deaths, especially among the elderly and the children. It has been very difficult, if not impossible, to provide medical help for those who need it, even during emergencies. Lack of medical devices and medications leave doctors and hospitals helpless when it comes to performing operations or emergency work. Surgeries have been done without anaesthesia or pain relievers.
- Unsanitary water conditions were a direct cause for many communicable diseases to appear and spread after they had been eradicated decades ago. This will affect generations and generations.
- Lack of electricity for long hours daily has become another reason for abnormal and unhealthy life conditions. Factories and manufacturers stopped operating. Small workshops had to close down and most household electrical equipment is ruined. In addition, the lack of electricity prevents school children from having proper studying conditions. Many students have had to drop out of school because they could not afford school supplies, clothes and shoes. Many drop out of school so they can help support their families.
- School conditions are unhealthy and unsanitary: windows without glass, classes without chairs or desks, offices without necessary supplies. Our students in many schools sit on the floor or use milk crates to sit on and study in their classrooms. There is no maintenance of any kind; the situation is miserable.
- In the hospitals the conditions are unbearable not only due to scarcity of medical and sterile supplies, but also due to the unavailability of medical devices and

machines needed for simple daily use in any basic hospital (for example syringes and needles).

- What can I say about the sewer system and the dirty water which fills our streets and many times our homes? And I can tell you much more about our miserable life and all the problems that we face every day.

Our social life has been destroyed. Many psychological and mental problems are spreading widely day after day through the people, especially between our youngsters. Worry and stress are causing nightmares for everyone, especially our children.

The number of very poor families increases by the day. Job opportunities are impossible and the jobless rate is very high. Signs of poverty and malnutrition are apparent on everyone's face. There is begging in our streets and searching garbage cans. Children perform disgraceful acts and do jobs that are not allowed or accepted anywhere else in the world. It is an unbearable situation, improper and unjust for any human being anywhere in the world.

Brothers and sisters, I stand before you today to give you a small picture of all the negative aspects of life that we have to encounter and live through every day as a whole country, and especially in southern Iraq, in Al-Basrah. And it is no secret to anyone in the humanitarian organisations that the way we live our lives is simply inhumane and unacceptable to any just person. What I say to you today is a fact that I live and witness every day.

Everything I share with you today goes back to one single reason: The embargo, the sanctions, that have been imposed on us for the past 12 years. If it was not for this embargo, we would not have had to suffer without food, clean water, sanitary conditions. For we have enough natural resources to use and to maintain a normal healthy life. If it was not for the embargo, we could have good school systems, lunches for our children, so they could study and progress in their daily schooling.

To all of you people of conscience, we raise our voice asking for your help to lift the embargo, the sanctions, from us, from the people of Iraq, and apply justice by allowing us to get what is necessary for our daily survival. We, the people of Al-Basrah, ask you in the name of all the sufferers, in the name of our children, who are without milk, in the name of the elderly and the sick, who await their medicine. We, the innocent people, ask you and beg you to urge your government officials to lift the embargo imposed on us.

My brothers and sisters, I have high hopes and faith that you will deliver my message and request to responsible officials. To stand beside us and support the people who are suffering, is nothing more than doing justice.

These difficult circumstances gave our church a great opportunity to do its apostolic duty to serve humanity. We, as members of the church, are doing our best effort to give the "embargo" a different face, and that is: That the "embargo" is not just a penalty imposed by some people on others, but rather, in reality, an opportunity to

sanctify the soul, and to help it to accept and withstand pain and suffering and view them as an opportunity for redemption.

Against all existing difficulties, we do our best to lighten the burdens of pain and suffering on our brothers, sisters and children and all our people.

- We have opened, within our parish, a free pharmacy for distributing medicines to the poor patients, who have no money or access to medical supplies. We also provide them with money needed to obtain surgical operations.
- For small children, we have tried our best to allow them to live their childhood within reasonable circumstances. So we opened two kindergartens, provided them with learning supplies and reasonable comfort. We also transport the children back and forth and provide them with free breakfast every day.
- As for the young people, our hope for the future, they are in our mind and conscience all the time. We feel badly for their difficult psychological conditions. Because of that, we have opened an institute for teaching the operation and use of computers. We expect to graduate from this institute about 150 young people, boys and girls. We take care of all expenses, and the training is free for the students. We are also in the process of preparing an athletic field for their free time.
- We also participate in providing free transportation for students to go to their regular schools, colleges and universities.
- As a separate project for younger boys and girls, we provide the families of 112 poor children with monthly monetary support to help their parents provide them with a life suitable for normal childhood.
- In addition, we provide each year about 1000 pairs of shoes to school children and also provide them with school supplies to encourage them to remain in school and continue their education.
- As for the elderly, we visit them and check on their conditions, and help them to live the rest of their lives in comfort and hope. In Basrah there is an "old people's home" operated by the government. We help provide clothes and supplies and prepare to take to them all meals one day each week.
- For a number of poor families that have no income whatsoever, we provide a monthly income and a place to live for those that are homeless.
- In addition to all of these humanitarian and social projects, we have recently been faced with a major construction project. We have to make major repairs to our cathedral where the roof had fallen two years ago. We also built an orphanage for girls and opened workshops for young people to work and provide them with income. And it is our hope to construct a housing project for families with low income and the homeless.

Our reliance is on God and from God we request help.

August 18, 2002

+ Archbishop Gabriel Kassab

