

Around the Nation

20 Clergymen Back Priest Blasting Ill. 'Vigilantes'

CAIRO, Ill.—Twenty Roman Catholic and Protestant clergymen from the East St. Louis, Ill., area have rallied to the side of a white priest who charges that a group called the "White Hats" was acting as an armed vigilante organization to keep Negroes in line.

The clergymen moved into St. Columba Church with sleeping bags, cots and rubber air mattresses. Some of them said they were prepared to stay for two months.

The ministers, known as the "Concerned Clergy," are standing by the Rev. Gerald Montroy, the pastor of St. Columba. Father Montroy was sent by his bishop to Cairo in August to work with the poor.

Last week, Father Montroy called Cairo a racist town and said the activities of the White Hats group could cause racial violence.