

# Chavez and the Growers

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resisted. In 1968 Chavez called for a national boycott of California grape products and the growers laughed and appeared unconcerned. Farm Worker Union representatives fanned out all over the country organizing local boycott committees, and for two years the struggle continued. In early 1970 it became obvious that the boycott was hurting. California sales were down considerably and the cold storage bins in the San Joaquin and Imperial Valleys were overstocked.

Because the dispute involved mainly Mexican-American workers, most of whom were Catholics, Chavez appealed to Church leaders for support. The two-year boycott had been supported by many local Catholic diocesan groups throughout the country and it was also on the agenda of the 1969 annual meeting of the U. S. Catholic Bishops. They formed an ad hoc committee on Farm Labor, headed by Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Donnelly of Hartford, and offered to mediate the dispute. The Bishops' committee visited California on a fact finding tour, speaking with both growers and workers. In March of 1970 they were invited by several growers in the Imperial Valley to mediate and get both sides together. Out of this mediation came Chavez's first real successes.

Meanwhile, the Delano grape growers realized that time was running out for them and they in

turn, too requested the Bishops to mediate, and major contracts were worked out between Chavez and most of the California grape growers.

With this problem behind him, Chavez immediately announced his intention of organizing the lettuce growers in California's Salinas Valley, with companies which also had holdings in Arizona, but here a new danger threatened. Hardly had Chavez expressed his intentions, when it was announced that the growers in the lettuce and vegetable fields had suddenly signed all their field workers under contract to the Teamsters. No elections were held or card checks made. The workers were simply drafted into the Teamsters, and that was that.

Chavez was able to pull out some 7,000 workers in the Salinas Valley and for a while it looked as if he had succeeded. Some major corporations repudiated their Teamster contracts and signed up with Chavez, but a majority of the Salinas growers refused.

The Bishops' Committee was asked by the Teamsters and the United Farm Workers to mediate. A jurisdictional pact was signed between the Teamsters and Chavez, leaving the organization of the field workers to the United Farm Workers. The growers, however, refused to release the Teamsters from their contracts. In addition, Teamster locals in the area refused to honor the jurisdictional pact. An impasse was reached and several months later the Bishops' Committee

again brought the sides together, and a further jurisdictional pact was signed. Again, the growers refused to cooperate and it was a dead issue.

In the meantime, the United Farm Workers Union had officially affiliated with the AFL-CIO and was administering the contracts it already held. Some mistakes were made. Many of Chavez's associates were amateurs in union organizing and growers complained at every turn — sometimes with good cause. Most of the original contracts were up for renewal this year and Chavez began negotiating in April. Behind the scenes, the growers were also discussing contracts with the Teamsters for the same workers. In every case where UFW contracts expired, the talks were broken off and the growers signed immediately with the Teamsters. Only two southern California growers renewed contracts with Chavez and this has been the story ever since. The most recent to sign with the Teamsters were 30 large growers in the Delano area, who refused to renew with Chavez.

Chavez again called for a strike and boycott, and was aided by the AFL-CIO, which gave his union more than \$1.5 million to pay strikers. Behind the scenes, also, AFL-CIO leader George Meany was attempting to get the Teamsters out of the organization of field workers. Teamster President Frank Fitzsimmons entered into talks with the Chavez group and things looked promising until the Delano growers signed with the Teamsters. While the talks were in session, Chavez called this a "stab in the back" and broke off the talks.

Fitzsimmons has since repudiated the Delano pacts with his union, which he said were unauthorized, and Chavez has promised to renew the talks in the near future. This is the situation right now. The Teamsters have most of the contracts, although Chavez still maintains he has most of the people. Because of the violence accompanying this latest round of strikes, Chavez has called off the pickets and moved into an area where he could, in the past, claim some success — that of the boycott.

Almost a thousand farm workers from California are fanning out into the cities of the nation, assisting local boycott committees, urging people to do without lettuce and grapes unless they are picked by the United Farm Workers.

The growers do not seem to think the boycott will work this time and they are hanging onto their Teamster contracts, vowing never to sign with Chavez. Still, they underestimated him once, and it could happen again.

[Next week — This man Chavez, what is he?]

# Mass. Church Council Supports Chavez Stance

**Boston [RNS]** — The Massachusetts Council of Churches has threatened to launch a total boycott of supermarkets selling California table grapes or stocking California lettuce picked by workers not represented by the United Farm Workers Union.

The possibility of a 40-day boycott of all goods was announced by Dr. C. Joseph Sprague, executive secretary of the council, in a move to support the Farm Workers headed by Cesar Chavez.

"We want their (the supermarkets') pocketbooks to hurt so that corporate management will have to do what is right," he said.

Dr. Sprague said interreligious teams were visiting each supermarket in an effort to persuade the executives of these chains not to sell California grapes or non-UFW lettuce.

A number of chains were reportedly already cooperating with the Chavez union sup-

porters. Dr. Sprague said the Council of Churches would "consider seriously" a total boycott if other food outlets fail to cooperate.

Representatives of the Massachusetts Catholic Conference and the Massachusetts Board of Rabbis attended the press conference where Dr. Sprague made his announcement. They attested to their organizations' support of the Farm Workers.

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## Keeping Tabs

The Rosary and Altar Society of Our Mother of Sorrows parish, 5000 Mt. Read Blvd., is sponsoring a sale in the church hall Saturday, Sept. 29 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. All kinds of items will be sold, and anyone wishing to contribute may leave saleable items at the rectory.

The Rosary Society of St. Ann's parish will hold a pot luck supper in the school auditorium Thursday, Oct. 4 at 6:15 p.m. New members will be enrolled in the Confraternity of the Rosary at a short meeting following the supper.

The Women's Auxiliary, Park-Ridge Hospital, Dr. Gallaher Group, will hold their annual benefit card party Thursday, Oct. 11 at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$1 and may be obtained by calling Mrs. Gerald Mahon, 865-2331, or Mrs. Arthur Pemberton 663-7428.

The Southwest Golden Age Group will hold a social meeting at 1:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 28, at 34 Monica St.

Members of Rochester Circle, International Federation of Catholic Alumnae, and their friends, are invited to First Saturday Mass at Corpus Christi Church at 12:05 p.m. Oct. 6. Bishop James E. Kearney will give the homily.

The Parents Club of Nazareth Hall has elected Charles Albert, president; the Rev. Philip LiSuzzo, vice president; Philip Oca, treasurer, and Mrs. Anne Della Fave, secretary.

Rosarians of Holy Apostles will hold their annual communion breakfast Oct. 7, after the 8:30 Mass.

The St. James Rosary Society will meet at 8 p.m. Monday, Oct. 1, after church services, for a dessert buffet and a slide show by Mrs. John Welch of her travels in the British Isles.

Monthly Pentecostal Masses will be resumed at St. Charles Borromeo Church, 3001 Dewey Avenue, on Thursday, Sept. 27, at 7:30 p.m. Everyone is invited.

The Altar Society of Our Lady Queen of Peace will have its first meeting of the year at 7:45 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 3. Speaker will be Father John McDonald, SJ, rector at McQuaid Jesuit High School. Mrs. John Connor is chairman.

The Past Regents Club, Catholic Daughters of America of the Rochester Diocese, will hold its annual meeting and luncheon at the Holloway House in East Bloomfield Saturday noon, Sept. 20. Reservations will be received by Miss Olga Kalvelage of 7042 W. Main, Lima, N.Y. 14485; telephone 716-528-1785.

The Holy Rosary Guild will open its season Tuesday, Oct. 2, with Mass at 7:45, followed by a living rosary and a birthday party for members.

The Parents Club of McQuaid Jesuit High School will put on an Italian dinner Oct. 6, with festivities beginning at 7 p.m. Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Dauria and Mr. and Mrs. Joseph G. DiMaria are chairmen. Reservations should be made by Oct. 2 with Mrs. Richard L. Altier, 288-1395.

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This column's happiest readers are the men, women and children who know they're needed. The days we're busiest helping others are the happiest days of our lives. . . . Who needs you most? Surprisingly, God needs you — for instance, to help an abandoned orphan become a God-loving, responsible adult. Lepers need you (there are still 15-million lepers in the world), blind children need you, and so do we. . . . Here in New York we are your agents, telling you where the Holy Father says your help is needed, and channeling your help promptly and safely to the people in need. . . . Want to feel good right now? Do without something you want but do not need, and send the money instead for one of the needs below. You'll feel good, especially if your gift is big enough to mean a sacrifice to you. This is your chance to do something meaningful for the world—it's God's world—while you're still alive.

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