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Exiles in Toronto:

'Amnesty Plan Is Punitive'

By PAT PETRASKE

Toronto — It was a motley group in the four car caravan wending its way here from Rochester. A lawyer, housewives, students, former draft counselors and even a 74-year-old grandmother were supporting the "struggle to keep the issue of amnesty alive at a time when most people do not want to remember Indochina."

These words were spoken by Herbert Gordon, a member of Lawyers for Amnesty, who introduced his group, Americans for Amnesty-Rochester Area Coalition, to a handful of draft resisters and deserters. Gathered in the quiet, spacious Friends Meeting House just off the bustling Yorkville section, the Rochester group heard objections to President Ford's earned re-entry plan.

Gerry Congdon, a draft resister who has been absent without leave from the army for 5-1/2 years, believes support for a boycott of the earned re-entry plan is growing. The boycott was formally endorsed at the International Conference of American War Resisters held here. The resolution also called for a campaign of demonstrations and speaking tours for people who need amnesty, and their families.

"We reject punitive repatriation," said Congdon, an editor of a Canadian magazine for exiles, Amex.

Under President Ford's plan draft resisters must re-enter the United States by Jan. 31, 1975, take a pledge of allegiance and accept up to 24 months of alternate service of some kind.

The status of the young men varies. Some, like Congdon, who deserted from Ft. Bragg, N.C. face court martials. Others like Steve Grossman have been resisters

from the beginning. Most of them lived underground before leaving for Canada, Great Britain or Sweden. But their sympathy is for the estimated 100,000 resisters or deserters who still are living underground in the United States and look to the exiles as their spokesmen.

A disputed question has been the exact number of members in the exile community. President Ford, according to Congdon, has set the estimate at 4,000 exiles while he believes there are between 15,000 and 25,000.

"Ford wants to make it look like a large number of exiles are returning under his program and to minimize the protest against it," he said.

The basic objection to the re-entry plan is that it is punitive. "It's punishment for the war resisters and deserters because it maintains the government's opinion that the war is just, although the American people feel the war was a mistake," said exile Dan Stanton. Congdon called the exiles a "left-over problem of a war that is still raging."

Other objections voiced by the exiles centered on legal ambiguities they found in the plan. A condition of the plan is that those participating must live in the United States for up to 24 months while completing service. For exiles like Leonard Cross, who deserted in 1967 and married a Canadian, this could mean a loss of "landed immigrant" status.

The group was concerned about exiles who have become Canadian citizens but must take an oath of allegiance to the United States before being able to obtain visiting rights. Stanton suggested that the U.S. Department of Justice might declare the exiles to be aliens, and deportable.

Continued on Page 2



Dan Stanton and Rosalie McEvily



People to People

Photo by Anthony J. Costello

Father Joseph Beatini gives a sterling rendition of God Bless America during the celebration of his 25th anniversary as a priest recently in Licciana, Italy. In front of the flags of the respective nations, Father Beatini is flanked by Bishop Joseph L. Hogan of Rochester and Enzo David Belli, district mayor of 23 townships in the Licciana area. The Italians joined in the popular American song. Word and picture stories describing the events are on Pages 3, 11-14 and 20.

Synod Opens in Prayer

Vatican City [RNS] — Pope Paul, at a Mass in the Sistine Chapel marking the formal opening of the fourth world Synod of Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, delivered a homily in the form of a prayer directed to Jesus Christ.

Taking as his basic theme the Hebrew psalmist's expression of faith in God as "the strength and refuge" of his people, the Pope said:

"Lord Jesus, we do not know how to express the import of this reflection prior to the Synod of Bishops which we are about to

Msgr. Eckl: New Address

Msgr. George W. Eckl, the 97-year-old pastor emeritus of St. Ann's parish, has moved to St. Ann's Home. In good health, Msgr. Eckl will be glad to receive visits and correspondence from his many friends throughout the diocese.

open, except in the form of prayer."

Then referring to the central topic of the synod, "Evangelization of the Modern World," the pontiff went on to emphasize that Jesus is the beginning and end of evangelization.

"You, Lord Jesus," he prayed, "are the historical cause, the efficient and transcendental cause of this wonderful phenomenon. It is from you, the Teacher, from you, the Savior, from you, the Exemplar, from you the Pontiff and the Victim of salvation that the apostolate has sprung forth and been handed over to your chosen disciples, the Apostles, and from them, transmitted to us, the bishops, in an unbroken succession.

"Your word, like a flame spreading throughout the years and the events of history, reaches us with its attractive and imperative voice, always living, always new, always relevant. As

the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."

"That word to your Apostles means that we, their successors, must descend to the depths of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity in order to meet the very origin of the mandate which urges us on, and to discover the infinite riches of the divine life and the design of love which permeates, qualifies, and sustains our mission."

Alluding to the "cantic" of the Virgin Mary in which she expresses her lowliness before God, the Pope prayed, "Lord Jesus, we bishops have been chosen, not for our human qualities, but precisely because of our smallness, so that in the Messianic work that you have entrusted to us there should be no ambiguity deriving from anything of merely human importance. Rather, it is through our insignificance that your work should be made more evident."

Continued on Page 2