



300 Marchers Walk for Life

By JOHN DASH

More than 300 area supporters of a constitutional human life amendment marched in near-freezing weather last Saturday to place a wreath inscribed "The price of our dispassion is hunger, abortion and war," at the Rochester Liberty Pole.

The march noted the second anniversary of the Supreme Court decision on abortion. The actual anniversary is today, Jan. 22.

Carrying posters and wearing signs and buttons, the assembly heard from William Polito, chairman of Rochester area Right to Life, who urged a "constitutional offensive" against "infanticide and intentional

mercy killing." He also scored the use of tax dollars, hospitals and educational facilities to promote pro-abortion and pro-euthanasia programs.

He cited Dr. Albert Schweitzer, the centenary of whose birth is noted this year, who said, "If a man loses reverence for part of his life, he loses reverence for all life."

The group also heard from Johanna Jankowski, president of the New York State Right to Life, who said, "We are living in a time of tragedy. Every human being has a right to be protected from the violence done to his person."

She called abortion "selfishness," and citing a recent



Photo by Bruce Genut

Johanna Jankowski addresses pro-lifers before march.

Immaculate

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always been a quality school but has "found it impossible to continue quality education any longer."

Immaculate Conception is a member of the Council of Inner City Parishes (CICP) School System. Because of pressing financial difficulties, another CICP school, St. Bridget's closed last year and still another, St. Michael's, was converted from a junior high school to an elementary school. At the same time, it was announced that Mount Carmel would be closed but a grant from the Marie C. and Joseph C. Wilson Foundation kept that school in operation.

Father Daniel Brent, diocesan superintendent of schools, issued a statement Friday saying: "The Rochester Catholic diocese recognizes the invaluable contribution that the school and its staff are making to the service of inner city children. The community will sorely miss its presence. At the same time, the difficult fiscal situation of CICP has cramped its program and enrollments and necessitated

"It is hoped that at least some of the students at Immaculate Conception will be accommodated at other Catholic schools either within the CICP system or in neighboring Catholic schools."

Father Anthony J. Valenti, co-pastor of St. Michael's parish and chairman of the CICP urged the diocesan Priests' Council

Hunger

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abstinence throughout the liturgical year.

Changes in consumption of food and energy coupled with increased support for such agencies as Catholic Charities, Catholic Relief Services, and the Campaign for Human Development will both ease the immediate shortages and support work toward long-term solutions, the bishops' statement observes. At home, the needy must be found and helped, it says.

The Pastoral Plan of Action claims to be no more than a beginning for the Church. Bishop Hogan writes: "We all know that beautiful documents cannot of themselves correct the injustices of our society. The documents have to be translated into action

The bishop's letter went to the members of the priests' and sisters' councils, to pastors, parish council chairmen, regional coordinators, Catholic high school and campus ministry personnel and directors of diocesan departments.

at its meeting last week to make the CICP educational system a priority mainly because of the bleak financial situation of inner city Catholic schools. He used the imminent closing of Immaculate Conception as an example.

"I know the CICP can't finance four schools, I seriously doubt three, and I don't even know about two unless we straighten ourselves out financially," he said. "I still believe in an educational system but it isn't feasible now. It simply couldn't be financed."

Now there are three schools parochial K-6 in the inner-city, St. Michael's, Holy Redeemer and Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

According to Father Valenti, the diocese has not made its position clear on how schools fit into the mission of the diocese.

At present, the CICP is looking into the viability of maintaining an educational system and whether more schools should be discontinued if the financial system remains the same in this coming year.

"Hopefully, by March 1, all the smoke will be cleared and we will have made a decision by then," Father Valenti said, adding that he is optimistic that remaining inner city schools would be operable next year.

The Priests Council urged that "if any CICP schools are closed, this Priests Council calls on the new Priests Council to invite inner city leadership of Sisters, priests, and parish councils to present to the diocese their pastoral plans."

The meeting was the last for the present priests council with elections in the offing for the new council.

The first Immaculate Conception parish school was built in 1871 when Father Patricio Byrnes was pastor. Costing \$15,000, it was geared toward the secular as well as the religious education. Father James O'Hare was pastor from 1886 to 1898 and during that time he enlarged the school by adding basement rooms for society meetings, a hall and six additional classrooms.

Soon the school ranked among the largest in the diocese with a student enrollment of 900. In 1926, pastor Msgr. Joseph S. Cameron purchased property on Glasgow Street for a new school.

As times and the neighborhood changed, the school also took on new dimensions with the enrollment predominantly black and not Catholic.

The Immaculate Conception council will continue to support the CICP by making an annual contribution in line with its finances.

report from the doctors of the Mayo Clinic on morbidity rates following abortion, called the procedure "unsafe for later pregnancies."

Mary Dreger, the head of

Feminists for Life, a year-old, Long Island based group considers abortion "the biggest 'rip off' of women" by male dominated society.

She insisted that by granting

legal abortions, men still consider women as objects, and "women accept abortions because of feelings of rejection by men."

Monica Bauman led the group in song.

Bishop Spears Delays Accepting Woman Priest

By MARGARET CONNOLLY

A young woman who was ordained to the Episcopal priesthood last Summer in a rite described as "valid but irregular" will be unable to function as a priest this year in the Diocese of Rochester.

Merrill Bittner, 28, a deacon at the Church of the Good Shepherd in Webster, was told last week by Bishop Robert R. Spears Jr. that he could not now accept her as a priest. He said her status would not be clarified until "the General Convention of the Episcopal Church has acted upon the principle of ordaining women as priests."

Ms. Bittner was one of 11 women ordained in Philadelphia last July 29. The House of Bishops declared the ordinations invalid, but theologians whose advice Bishop Spears sought found to the contrary in the local woman's case.

DeSales

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Francis and St. Stephen's, cannot carry the burden alone, and no aid can be obtained from the diocese or from government sources, Eades continued.

He pointed out that the year-to-year crisis situation which has developed for the school created insecurity for students and parents, and also made it difficult to maintain a quality faculty. With enrollment going down, it would be impossible to justify continuing a varied, broad curriculum, and this is another aspect of the situation: which good teachers find discouraging, Eades added.

The high school was opened in September 1912, with 72 pupils and three Sisters of St. Joseph. During the first 40 years of operation, the principals were priests. Today there are 15 Sisters and 10 lay teachers, with Sister Agnes Catherine in charge.

One distinguished alumnus of DeSales is Auxiliary Bishop, John E. McCafferty, a New Yorker by birth, who was brought up in Geneva. A distinguished expatriate principal is Bishop Joseph I. Hogan, who served from 1953 until 1955.

The bishop was advised Jan. 7 by his Standing Committee to correct the "irregularity" of the ordination "at the earliest possible opportunity." He explained at a news conference Jan. 17 that he thought the opportunity had not arisen, and that he postponed a decision "with great reluctance." He said he felt he could not act "unilaterally" and feared that if he did so "it would damage seriously the chances of the General Convention's adopting the principle of ordaining women as priests when it meets next year."

In a statement addressed to the clergy of the diocese, and circulated at the bishop's news conference, Ms. Bittner said she harbored no resentment. "I have no inclination to assume judgment on such matters," she said. "And I will continue to pray that one day we will labor side by side in the work of the Lord."

The news conference at diocesan headquarters on East Avenue had seemed to have landmark potential, in view of the announced position of the Standing Committee. None of the 11 Philadelphia ordinations has been accepted.

After the bishop paraphrased his statement for television, the cameras focused on Canon St. Julian Simpkins, who said the clergy of the diocese "shared the bishop's loneliness" and reaffirmed their "love and support." Meanwhile, a statement was supplied by a committee of lay people whom the bishop had



Photo by Bruce Genut

BISHOP SPEARS

directed to prepare a position paper on the ordination of women. This committee regarded his delay as contrary to the advice of the Standing Committee and declared it a "denial of the Christian witness which the committee fundamentally affirmed in its recommendation."

Commenting on an observation that the diocese had seemed to be pioneering in the women's movement, Bishop Spears wryly observed that "our pioneer status after today may be in question"

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