

70,000 Marchers Rally at Capitol

Washington, D.C. (RNS) — An estimated 70,000 "pro-life" demonstrators from all over the U.S. took part here in the annual March for Life and again called on the Congress to adopt a human life amendment to the Constitution that would outlaw abortions.

Marching past the White House and up Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol, waving signs and chanting anti-abortion slogans, the demonstrators carried red roses and some rang bells "to toll for life." They tied up traffic for several hours

on a cold but sunny day in the nation's capital.

The night before (Jan. 22), some 280 demonstrators marked the fifth anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's rulings legalizing elective abortion by conducting an all-night vigil outside the White House. President Carter was vacationing on St. Simons island off the coast of Georgia.

Nellie Gray, president of the March for Life, told demonstrators that she expressed outrage when she met earlier with White House aides and President

Carter's domestic affairs adviser Stuart Eisenstadt over the compromise on Medicaid abortions. Although most welfare women will not be able to procure abortions under Medicaid, she said "the life issue is not one for compromise. Either you're for killing babies or you're against killing babies."

Ms. Gray, commenting on the march and rally, said she believed the number of demonstrators was larger than last year and estimated the crowds at more than 100,000. She noted that more than 500 buses were scheduled to arrive for the march. She added that "this year's march reflects a continuing spontaneity and fellowship" and a "growing commitment" to work for a constitutional amendment.

Rep. Robert Bauman (R-Md.) told a cheering crowd on the Capitol steps that "we are not going to brook this kind of massacre" of the unborn that, he said, was sanctioned by the 1973 high court rulings.

Prior to the march, a "pro-choice" press conference was held by various groups supporting abortion. Under the auspices of the National Abortion Rights Action League, it was announced that a new organization was being founded to work for

the restoration of all federal funding for abortion.

Prayer Series Scheduled at Motherhouse

The Glory of Yahweh Christian Fellowship has scheduled a series of prayer and teaching events at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse, 4095 East Ave.

Father James Connolly, S.J., Cornell University chaplain, will be celebrant at the opening liturgy in the Motherhouse chapel at 7:30 p.m., Monday, Feb. 6.

Community worship, scripture teaching and healing prayer will be topics at meetings Feb. 13 and 27. Plans for March through June are being formulated.

Further information is available from Martin Lynch, 385-1035.

ADORATION SET

The monthly adoration devotions will be held at Blessed Sacrament Church on Thursday, Feb. 2 beginning at noon. Rosary will be recited at 12:15 p.m. The afternoon vigil before the Blessed Sacrament will close with a 5 p.m. benediction followed by a 5:15 p.m. Mass.

Brighton Parish Is 50 Years Old

Our Lady of Lourdes parish in Brighton, half a century old this year, will begin an anniversary celebration with special liturgies during the first week of Lent. Saturday, Feb. 11, is the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

attend the Sunday celebration.

The Brighton parish was established in 1928 by Bishop Thomas F. Hickey, second bishop of Rochester, for 104 families. Present enrollment exceeds 700 families.

On Ash Wednesday, Feb. 8, Father Charles Lavery, CSB, president of St. John Fisher College, will celebrate Mass at 5:30 p.m. and give the homily. Celebrants and homilists at 5:30 on Feb. 9, 10 and 11 will be, in order, Fathers James Wolfe and David Gramkee, former assistant pastors, and Father William Poorten, S.J., of McQuaid Jesuit High School.

The pastor, Msgr. Leslie G. Whalen, will offer the Sunday noon Mass, Feb. 12, and Timothy E. Leahy, new superintendent of diocesan schools, will give the homily. Leahy formerly taught at Lourdes school and served as principal. A social hour arranged by CCD parents will follow this Mass. Some of the original parishioners are expected to



Kevin Doran, manager of Hornell Station WLEA, phoned: "I've been four times to Wyalusing, and it's better than a retreat. I want to interview the pastor. Will you come with me?"

What is Wyalusing? It is a village of some 3,000 souls, about 20 miles beyond Tonawanda, Pa. Eight months ago a rumor seeped out that strange supernatural things were happening there. People reported seeing pictures of Our Lord, Our Lady, angels and saints on the tabernacle veil of the Catholic church. K.D. claims to have seen these images, and that friends of his have had the same experience. "There is a tranquility in the church I've never known anywhere else." By training, priests are skeptical of alleged supernatural phenomena, and I am no exception. Most peculiar phenomena can be explained naturally, without divine intervention.

At 11:30 Thursday morning, Jan. 19, I left St. Ann's Home, Rochester, for Hornell. I missed Fr. Atwell at Avon. He was out celebrating Mass in some Rochester-episcopal church. Popped in on Fr. Carron at Geneseo. He ordered several copies of Abp. Whealon's "Living the Catholic Faith Today," saying, "It may be good for our Lenten study club." Dropped by car to St. Ann's, Hornell; transferred to the Doran van, and at 3 p.m. off to Wyalusing. Onward southeast through Corning and Elmira, and at 4:30 dropped off at the famous O'Brien's Inn at Waverly to stave off starvation with two pork chops, cottage cheese and tossed salad.

At 6:10 we arrived at the Wyalusing rectory. The nice housekeeper gave us coffee to sip while pastor and K.D. arranged for taping the interview after 7:30 p.m. Mass. It was agreed that 1) the interview would be a kind of Barbara Walters type of interview; 2) the pastor should be entirely in the background. ("What I believe is happening is important; I am not.") 3) No wild claims should be made; just a simple narration of events and testimonies.

Then we went to the little country church for Mass. It seats only 150 persons and was built only 27 years ago

on the outskirts of the village. The Altar of Sacrifice is in the center of the sanctuary. On the right side is a long table with colored vigil lights. On the left side is the shrine of the Most Blessed Sacrament, with a standard cylindrical tabernacle covered with a satin veil clearly visible under a kind of gold-color mesh like flimsy cloth. This is the veil that is causing wonder. The pastor celebrated Mass at 7:30 p.m. in the manner of any ordinary priest. The congregation of eight or nine parishioners sat in the back pews and made the Mass responses with a vigor from simple faith, untrammelled by sophisticated theology. After Mass we made a Holy Hour and then, laden with taping equipment, went to the rectory for the interview and taping session. It began at 9 p.m. and continued to 11. During the interview I studied the pastor, wondering was he a crackpot, or perhaps a hallucinator, watching his eyes for the glint of a fanatic or a schizophrenic. However, my conclusions were these: This is a man ordained about 25 years ago from St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore; a product of a normal home, one of eight children, four of whom became priests. He is conservative in his ecclesiology, has a great devotion to Our Blessed Mother, perhaps is better reading theology than many priests, since he reads until 3 in the morning. He gives no indication of being a mystic. His sense of humor is evidenced as he frequently chuckles at incongruities which arise in his work.

The pastor seems to be no Cure of Ars or Padre Pio, but just a nice country pastor, concerned about CCD classes, parish committees, the mission church 15 miles away, with a special devotion to God's Holy Mother.

Before the interview began I said, "Father, I have no expectation of seeing anything, but I am interested in what is happening to people." He chuckled, "Priests by their training are the most skeptical of all, and priests are the least likely to see anything on the veil."

(Next week: the alleged visions at Wyalusing.)

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