

Bishops Press Stouffer Boycott

Bishop Matthew H. Clark and Episcopal Bishop Robert Spear last week called on the Rochester religious community to boycott the new Stouffer hotel, as part of the ongoing boycott of Nestle products. Stouffer Corp. is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Nestlé Co. of Switzerland.

"The boycott seeks to pressure the Nestle Corp. to comply in substance and spirit with World Health Organization (WHO)/UNICEF Code of marketing breast-milk substitutes," Bishop Spears said at a press conference announcing the Stouffer boycott. "A careful scrutiny of these guidelines still shows ambiguity of language and discrepancies between Nestle's policies and the WHO code," he said.

The retiring bishop of the Episcopal diocese cited a statement of Dr. Steven C. Joseph of the American Public Health Association, made in May 1981: "The best available estimates ascribe up to one million of infant deaths to diarrhea and under-nutrition associated with artificial formula feeding."

The bishop said the boycott continues because "the corporation's policy can be seen as a serious attempt on the lives of those who cannot defend themselves. What we ask of Nestle is that they comply with a code which was voted by 118 nations."

"Until they do so we call on organizations and community groups to join the members of the Rochester INFACOT coalition in refusing to use Stouffer's hotel for meetings and other functions. We call on individuals to refrain from using the hotel facilities. We also ask organizations and individuals to recommit themselves to the total boycott of Nestle's products and facilities, to advise by letter the Nestle Corporation of your actions, and to pray that this deadly assault on children might soon come to an end."

INFACOT is a national organization seeking to ensure Nestle compliance with the WHO/UNICEF code.

Bishop Clark at the press conference emphasized his support for the position outlined by Bishop Spears and furthered the appeal to the religious community.



Bishop Clark (center) is flanked by Carol Crossed of INFACOT and Bishop Spears. Representatives of a number of boycott supporters stand behind them.

"Life is the gift of God to all persons, and when Nestle promotes a product which directly impacts on this right, and when it involves small children whose voices cannot be raised, it becomes imperative that others raise their voices. It is precisely for this reason that we speak today as religious leaders in this community."

"There is irrefutable evidence," he said, "as recent as two weeks ago, that Nestle continues to violate the WHO/UNICEF code, therefore promoting their products without full recognition of the health hazards they create. Babies get sick and die because these products are used."

Addressing the economic question, Bishop Clark also said:

"We are well aware that it is not only difficult but unpopular to fight an action that promises to bring to a city already hard-hit by unemployment temporary jobs that will be created during the extensive restoration of the hotel and the permanent jobs once the hotel is operational."

"The moral balance, however, is critical and the positive aspects of local employment can be canceled out if the life of one infant is lost due to Nestle's failure to

adhere strictly to the code. To some the link may appear to be a thin one, but it is real and must be addressed on a moral level."

While he said that the appeal was aimed primarily at the religious community, he also said that he hoped civil leaders would study the issue and form their consciences on the rightness of the boycott.

The boycott has already garnered the support of a wide variety of groups, ranging from the Genesee Valley Presbytery, the state synod of the Lutheran Church, the Monroe Association of the American Baptist Churches, Genesee Ecumenical Ministries and the Genesee Valley Association of the United Church of Christ to such groups as the parish council of St. Joseph's Church in Penfield.

In a side issue, Bishop Clark singled out young people for their support of the boycott.

He told Sharon Casler, a 10th-grader at Pittsford's Sutherland High to thank her friends for signing petitions to Nestle.

Miss Casler had learned of the press conference and had attended with nearly 60 signatures on a petition that Nestle comply with the

WHO/UNICEF marketing code.

She said the bishop told her, "It is nice to know that students are involved in current events; and it's nice to know that people are concerned" with questions seemingly so removed from their daily activities.

"It was a nice conversation," she said last week.

Miss Casler and her family have been involved with the Nestle boycott for some years. She said that her mother, Erika, was active in promoting the question.

The diocesan International Justice and Peace Commission has been the major promoter of the boycott in the diocese for a number of years.

The commission listed the following products as involved in the Nestle boycott:

- Nestle Chocolate
- Price's Chocolates
- Nescafe

- Decaf Sunrise Coffee
- Nestea
- Maggi
- Deer Park Spring Water
- Los Hermanos Wines
- Crosse & Blackwell Wines
- Stouffer, frozen foods, hotels, restaurants
- Rusty Scupper Restaurants
- Jonas Skin Care Products
- L'Oréal Cosmetics
- Nestle Cookie Mixes
- Nestle Toll House Chocolate Chips
- Taster's Choice
- Cain's Coffees
- Pero Coffee Substitutes
- QUIK
- Souptime
- Pine Hill Crystal Water
- Beringer Bros. Wines
- Libby's
- Cherry Hill Cheese
- Lancome Cosmetics
- Contique Lens Cleaner
- Beach Nut Baby Foods

In addition, the commission listed a number of actions open to dioceses to further the boycott. Included on that list are:

- Advise organizations to which you belong that you cannot attend events held at the Stouffer hotel. Encourage these groups to

examine the issues and take a stand.

- Send letters to Bishop Clark expressing support for his public stand both on the international Nestle boycott and on the local boycott of the Stouffer hotel.

- Send letters to Stouffer Corp. advising that you plan to observe the boycott of the local hotel. Send letters to Nestle indicating your intention to continue observing the Nestle boycott.

The commission also published the following addresses:

Bishop Matthew H. Clark
Pastoral Center
1150 Buffalo Road
Rochester, N.Y. 14624

Mr. Helmut Maucker
President, Nestle, S.A.
Vevey, Switzerland

Nestle Corp. (attn.
David Guerrant, president)
100 Bloomington Road
White Plains, N.Y. 10605

Stouffer Corp.
29800 Bainbridge Road
Solon, Ohio

DONALD J. MEEHAN
Retired U. S. Internal Revenue Agent
Public Accountant
Member National Society of Public Accountants
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Youth Day

Young people from across the diocese take a "seventh-inning stretch" during Youth Day activities recently at Monroe Community College. The event, sponsored by the diocesan Catholic Youth Organization with the diocesan Office of Youth Ministry, drew more than 250 youths.

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