

USCC Reaffirms Support for Washington March

**By James B. Burke
NC News Service**
Msgr. Daniel F. Hoyer, general secretary of the U.S. Catholic Conference has written to all U.S. bishops, restating USCC support for the 20th anniversary March on Washington, and pointing out that march organizers have made "serious efforts" to accommodate Jewish concerns.

In the last weeks before the Aug. 27 observance, Catholic groups across the nation raised money to help unemployed or handicapped people get to the march, several U.S. dioceses or diocesan agencies promoted the march and four bishops said they would attend.

The 20th Anniversary March on Washington for Jobs, Peace and Freedom will begin at 8 a.m. on the Mall in

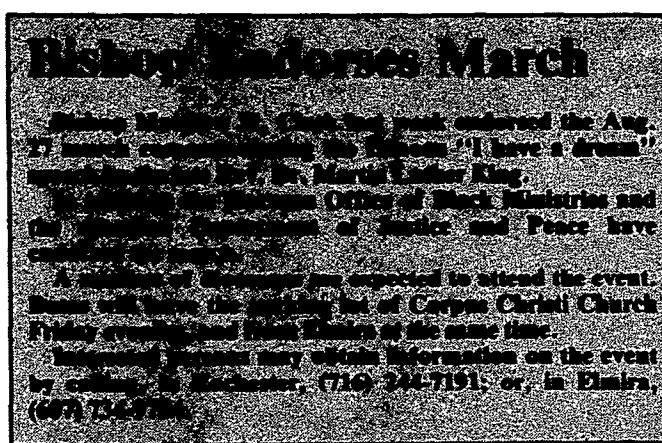
Washington. The main march program will take place at 1 p.m. at the Lincoln Memorial.

The march will commemorate the Aug. 28, 1963 March on Washington, led by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.

In an Aug. 18 memo to bishops, Msgr. Hoyer said, "Recent press accounts have called attention to the fact that some organizations, traditionally supportive of civil rights concerns, have not endorsed the march."

He said "several Jewish organizations" had withheld support because of what they believed to be "an implied criticism of Israel's military policy" in march materials.

"The organizers of the march have discussed this matter at length with



Bishops Endorse March
Bishops of the U.S. Catholic Conference endorsed the Aug. 27 observance of the 20th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington for the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. The U.S. Catholic Conference, Office of Black Ministries and the National Conference of Bishops for Justice and Peace have endorsed the march. A national conference is expected to attend the event. Bishops who will attend the event include: Archbishop John J. O'Connor, Newark; Archbishop John R. Roach, Philadelphia; Archbishop Joseph P. Kamp, St. Louis; Archbishop Robert E. McElroy, St. Paul; Archbishop Joseph A. DiNoia, Washington; Archbishop John J. Sheehan, New York; Archbishop John J. Mitty, San Francisco; Archbishop John J. Hallinan, San Diego; Archbishop Joseph E. Ruffini, San Antonio; Archbishop Joseph H. Egan, New Orleans; Archbishop Joseph A. Bamberga, St. Louis; Archbishop Joseph A. DiNoia, Washington; Archbishop John J. Sheehan, New York; Archbishop John J. Mitty, San Francisco; Archbishop Joseph E. Ruffini, San Antonio; Archbishop Joseph H. Egan, New Orleans; Archbishop Joseph A. Bamberga, St. Louis.

representatives of Jewish organizations and have amended the problematic language in an attempt to avoid any possible misunderstanding," Msgr. Hoyer said.

"In short, while not all groups are supporting the march, serious efforts have

been made to accommodate the concerns raised by Jewish organizations," he said. "One of the largest Jewish organizations, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, remains a full supporter of the march."

The memo pointed out that Archbishop John Roach,

president, had endorsed the march on behalf of the USCC and National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

In Chicago, Peggy Roach, administrative assistant in the office of human relations, said, "When I realized I wouldn't be able to go to the march, I decided I would donate the \$70 to the Chicago march coalition to send an unemployed person in my place." Ms. Roach attended the 1963 march. Her office also wrote a letter to 50 priests asking for donations to a transportation fund for 70 handicapped Chicagoans.

Parishes and organizations in the Archdiocese of New York have been contributing to similar funds for the unemployed, according to Carlos Rodriguez, liaison for the Archdiocese of New York's office of social development and justice and peace.

Father Raymond Tetrault of St. Michael's Parish in Providence, R.I., showed slides he had taken on a factfinding trip to Nicaragua in order to raise money for the march ridership fund in Providence, said Marian Cotty of the Providence Diocese's community affairs vicariate.

Several dioceses promoting the march did so through ecumenical and interfaith coalitions.

"It's a very broad coalition we've been working with locally on the march — Hispanics, blacks, religious, peace and labor groups," said Gary Koos of the diocesan office of social concerns in Bridgeport, Conn.

The Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn sent representatives to the New York City organizing committee for the march, said Maureen Roach of the committee.

Nine buses and several cars were expected to carry about 450 Bridgeport citizens to the march, Koos said. About 25 percent of the Bridgeport contingent are Catholics, he said.

"People are going because King spent a lot of time organizing here and because we are seeing a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, racism and anti-semitism in this area," Koos said.

In the archdiocese of Newark the commission on peace and justice announced its endorsement of the march in a letter to priests.

In Richmond, Va. the diocese's Parenting for Justice Program will participate in a pre-march educational event on jobs, peace and freedom for children, according to Paul

Roberts of the Richmond Peace Education Center.

"The kids will draw their conception of jobs, peace and freedom on a banner which will be presented to Sen. John Warner (R-Va.)," Roberts said.

Fifty buses — including three for Catholic groups and four donated by St. Edward's Parish, Richmond — will leave Richmond for the march, Roberts said.

Cardinal Humberto Medeiros of Boston wrote a march organizer that he joined "with ecumenical colleagues" in repeating support of the March on Washington's principles, an archdiocesan official said.

The Archdiocese of San Francisco's Commission on Social Justice is helping to put on a West Coast version of the march on Aug. 27.

"We felt going to Washington was not a good use of our time and money," said Thomas Ambrogio, chairman of the San Francisco archdiocesan commission.

The Archdiocese of Washington will hold a prayer service for Catholics in the march on Aug. 27 at 10:30 a.m. in Lafayette Square, near the White House. Auxiliary Bishop Eugene Marino of Washington, one of the nation's seven black bishops, will give a short homily at the service.

Archbishop James A. Hickey of Washington, who will address the march, has urged parishes in the archdiocese to participate in the march as "an important sign of the church's continuing concern for racial justice and human rights."

Also expected to attend the march are Bishops P. Francis Murphy, auxiliary of Baltimore, and Walter Sullivan of Richmond, Va.

Consortium Joins March

Elmira — The August 27 Coalition, a consortium of people and groups from Chemung and Tompkins counties, including the Southern Tier Office of Social Ministry, announced last week that several buses would leave for the March on Washington for Jobs, Peace and Freedom, Friday, Aug. 26 and return Saturday, Aug. 27.

The Greater Elmira Unemployment Council and the Chemung Valley Women for Peace and Justice are also members of the consortium. Further information is obtained by calling the Office of Social Ministry, 734-9784.

'I HAVE A DREAM'

By James B. Burke

Washington (NC) — The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. had recently been jailed in his quest for civil rights, yet in a now-famous, August 1963 speech at the Lincoln Memorial, he said he still believed in the American dream.

"I say to you today, my friends, that in spite of all the difficulties and frustrations of the moment I still have a dream," he said.

"It is a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal,'" he added.

Dr. King's 1,300-word address, now known as "I Have a Dream," "electrified" the 250,000-person March on Washington on Aug. 28, 1963. Coretta King, his widow, recalls.

Dr. King was assassinated April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tenn., at age 39.

The 20th Anniversary March on Washington for Jobs, Peace and Freedom will be Aug. 27 and is drawing support from the Catholic community.

In 1963 the marchers, who had come to Washington to protest racism, violence and poverty, listened to nine speakers before Dr. King.

"Dr. King touched the emotions in a way different from the other speakers," said Mathew Ahmann, a Catholic who also addressed the march. "He used repetitions of phrases, a cadence that brought the crowd up," Ahmann explained. Dr. King's speech had two movements.

Roughly the first half of the speech was an analysis of what he called the "appalling condition" of blacks in the U.S. and how it should be changed soon.

He began by noting that the Emancipation Proclamation, a presidential decree freeing slaves, had been issued 100 years ago.

"But 100 years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free," he said.

"One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination," he continued.

The marchers had come to Washington, according to Dr.

King, to cash a "check" for "unalienable rights" issued by the nation's founders. America had "defaulted on this promissory note insofar as her citizens of color" were concerned, he said.

"But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt," he added.

"We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now," Dr. King said.

"Those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual," he said.

But Dr. King, an advocate of non-violent social change, urged black people not to "be guilty of wrongful deeds" in the struggle for rights.

He recommended meeting physical force "with soul force."

At the same time he described the new militancy among blacks as "marvelous" and encouraged opposition to police brutality and discrimination.

In the second half of the speech Dr. King's style shifted from analysis to exhortation. He called for faith in the American dream with a litany of his anticipations of the dream's fulfillment.

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but the content of their character," he said.

"I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers."

He closed with a series of pleas for the states to "let freedom ring."

If freedom rings throughout the nation, he said, "we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing... 'Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!'"

War in Chad Paralyzes Church

By NC News Service
Flare-ups in the 19-year-old civil war in Chad have hampered Catholic Church activities in the African country, especially in the capital of N'Djamena, according to FIDES, the news service of the Vatican Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

The country's 233,000 Catholics represent slightly more 5 percent of the population of land-locked Chad, a former French colony which gained independence in 1960. The total population is 4.5 million.

In the Archdiocese of N'Djamena, the most urgent problem is reconstructing buildings, including the Catholic cathedral, destroyed by bombings, FIDES said.

FIDES also said that present fighting between Libyan-backed rebels and Chadian government forces in the north has hindered church evangelization efforts in the region.

"The pastoral activity will be conditioned by the evolution of the political situation," said FIDES.

Northern Chad, which borders Libya, is populated by a majority of nomadic Moslems. In the more densely populated south, the population is composed mainly of Christians and animists.

Besides the Archdiocese in N'Djamena, the Catholic Church in Chad has dioceses in the southern cities of Moundou, Pala and Sarh.

Of the 143 priests in Chad, only eight are native diocesan priests. Other church personnel include 34 brothers and 166 nuns.

FIDES reported that Chad has 29 major seminarians.

To fill the vocations gap, the bishops are training lay catechists. Currently, more than 1,000 catechists are working in the country's four dioceses.

"In many cases, evangelization at the level of the local community will depend ever more on the pastoral services of the catechists," said FIDES.

This summer, the civil war

has intensified as Libyan leader Col. Muammar Kadhafi moved troops into northern Chad to support the guerrillas.

Advances by the Libyan-backed rebels have caused France and the United States to increase their support for the government.

France has sent about 1,000 military advisers to

Chad to aid the government fight the guerrillas. France has provided logistic military aid, but has been reluctant to have its troops become involved in the fighting.

The United States has restricted its military aid to equipment, saying that France must bear the main responsibility, because of its 1976 military cooperation treaty with Chad.

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