

Retreat

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tude," he observed.

Father O'Shea said "there is no question that they are storing nuclear weapons — including the neutron bomb — at the depot," and added that he would like to see the weapons removed from the depot so that it could be transformed into a "depot of life."

"I'd like to see the depot used not as a hostile place but as a hospice — like a monastery," he said. "I say shut it down."

No arrests resulted from the civil disobedience by 27 activists who conducted a prayerful occupation of the clinic at Highland Hospital in Rochester. Sit-in organizers, who arrived at the clinic around 7 a.m. and left around 10 a.m., said they succeeded in convincing at least two women not to have abortions and in closing down the facility early.

The rescue marked the first for Father Berrigan, who participated with the three other priests involved in the depot action and Father Anthony P. Mugavero, parochial vicar at St. Theodore's Church in Rochester. Deacons Mike Krupiarz and Eugene Fuerst also participated in the sit-in at the hospital.

Dr. Michael Affleck, the former director of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality in Ro-

chester and current coordinator of justice and peace programming for the Center of Social Concerns at Notre Dame University, led the Highland action.

Approximately two dozen supporters who picketed outside the hospital were disrupted when nine youths wearing pro-choice T-shirts — who were believed to be part of a group known as "skinheads" — arrived on the scene. One of the youths attacked a sign carried by one of the demonstrators. He was arrested by police and charged with criminal mischief.

Three other youths were arrested and charged with disorderly conduct.

Father O'Shea said the two-day "Pilgrimage for Life and Peace" retreat was successful in linking the issue of abortion and militarism, and that it called for "a consistent ethic of life."

"The human family is threatened, perhaps as at no time before. Indications are widespread that we will not wake up in time to protect the delicate threads that weave the fabric of life on our planet," the priest said. "Our nuclear stockpiles and our selfish disregard for our air and ocean are ominous indicators. So too are the 50 million abortions being performed worldwide each year. It is urgent that we say 'yes' to the sacredness of all life in a society that increasingly deals out violence and death."

In addition to Father Berrigan and Affleck, Marcia Timmel and Catherine Holderread-Passmore spoke at the retreat.

Timmel works with the Olive Branch Catholic Worker Community in Washington, D.C., and Holderread-Passmore is a producer of pro-life films and a member of the feminist ministry of the Mennonite Central Committee in Oregon.

"We are in the process of creating a wholistic pro-life/pro-peace witness, where the single issue of disarmament or abortion are no longer credible when isolated one from the other," Timmel said.

Likewise, Father O'Shea added, "if the Christian church of this country were to become both non-violent and feminist, then a Christian concern about the taking of life in abortion would no longer be viewed by others as hypocrisy."

"Until we as Christians turn from our oppression of women and our support of nuclear weapons," the priest added, "our pro-life campaigning will be 'disconnected.'"

The retreat gained the support of Abbot John Eudes Bamberger, OCSO, abbot of the Abbey of the Genesee. "The witness given by the Faith and Resistance Community on their retreat ... is a response to the call of our bishops to express actively

the sanctity of life," he said. "I can speak only personally — not for my community — as I affirm my own belief in the need to stand up for the right to life and the cause of peace at this moment in our nation's history."

Many of the participants in the retreat said they were also spurred by the statement issued last December by the office of Bishop Matthew H. Clark, supporting the right of diocesan members to engage in non-violent civil disobedience, but noting that those who do so "must also be willing to accept the legal consequences of such action."

One of those people was Jan Bezila, one of the lay organizers of the retreat. "It was a tremendously inspiring weekend. You could feel the Spirit very much at work — particularly in the actions," she said.

The Faith and Resistance Community has established a fund to help people working in military-related or abortion-related jobs to move to other positions for reasons of conscience. Those seeking applications or information about the fund can call Father Bob Werth at 716/325-7336.

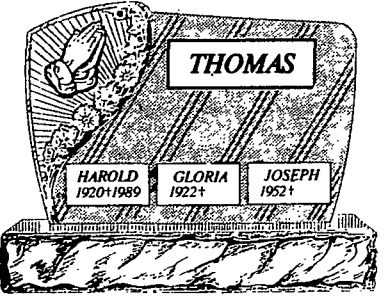
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