

Pro-lifers

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refused to give up her seat to a white person in Montgomery, Ala., back in 1956. This incident sparked a boycott in Montgomery by blacks who refused to ride on public transportation until the city desegregated the buses.

"Nobody took a survey on the bus (Parks rode) to see if anyone was traveling

to a doctor," Father Mugavero said. "We wouldn't have condemned her action because she didn't check that out first."

Father Mugavero's contention doesn't hold water with a local veteran of anti-nuclear protests, Jack Bradigan-Spula, coordinator of the Rochester Peace and Justice Education Center. Bradigan-Spula doesn't agree that the rescuers are merely engaged in the type of work civil-rights activists undertook.

"I think that's a specious analogy that the rescuers use," he said, remarking that

the rescuers' actions deny health care to women. Bradigan-Spula acknowledged he was pro-choice, and said he would have no problem inconveniencing scientists on their way to work at a nuclear research and development center.

The PJEC director said the anti-abortion movement is not on sound philosophical ground because no world-wide consensus has been formed on the morality of abortion. "If it's a question of the wane of the welfare of the woman vs. the embryo or fetus, I come down on the side of the

woman," he said.

Bradigan-Spula's statement points out the underlying factor in the debate over the ethics of pro-life civil disobedience: While most Americans agree that nuclear war and racial segregation are evil, U.S. citizens remain deeply divided over abortion. Until a national consensus on abortion is reached, pro-life rescuers will continue to be hailed as heroes by those who see the fetus as a human being and reviled as outlaws by those who consider abortion a woman's right.

Kidnappers

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Father Amico wouldn't have to sleep on a mattress on the floor.

Father Amico speculated that the benign treatment he received at the captors' hands may have been their way of softening any fear and resentment he had. Nonetheless, when they released him, the captors told the priest that the ELN wouldn't be "too happy" if he didn't take their message to the press.

After his release, Father Amico distributed the leftist literature given to him to the press and U.S. and Colombian authorities. The guerrillas, he observed, were not associated with the country's notorious drug cartels, despite having kidnapped Americans during the anti-drug summit. "They are against (drug trafficking) in society," Father Amico said.

The ELN released Father Amico on Feb. 19, driving him back into Cali to a spot from which he took a cab to his parish. To cheering throngs of thousands of

parishioners, the freed and exhausted cleric walked back into his church that evening just after a service on his behalf had concluded.

Now, back in the barrio, Father Amico said he will work on renewing his visa and continuing his pastoral efforts among the Colombian poor. He pointed out that his parish is filled with impoverished people who suffer from a lack of adequate food, clothing and shelter.

The priest has little fear that the ELN will attempt to kidnap him again, but he acknowledged concern that right-wing extremists might target him as a potential sympathizer with his former captors. Death squads occasionally sweep through his barrio, Father Amico said, killing prostitutes, homosexuals and other people the right wing considers "undesirable."

Throughout his recent ordeal, Father Amico said that he kept thoughts of his fellow Basilians and his American relatives in mind. "I felt I was more concerned about my family and the Basilian community more than anything else," he said. "That was probably the greatest suffering

during my captivity."

Relieving the suffering of his parishioners will now preoccupy the priest, who said he didn't want to capitalize on his new-found publicity, but hoped that Americans would take his experience as an opportunity to learn about the situation in Colombia and the United States' involvement there. For example, the priest questioned whether U.S. aid to the Colombian government reaches those it is intended to help.

"I think there's a lot of stealing, a lot of

misused funds," he said. "Money for food goes to arms or goes into the pockets of the wealthy governing body. I can tell you that not much of it comes into the barrios of the poor."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Father Amico said his parish needs "absolutely anything" to continue its mission work. Readers may send donations to Our Lady of the Assumption Parish in care of: Father Francis Amico, A.A., 7520 Cali, Valle, Colombia.

Season Apart

Continued from page 2

alcoholism, consumerism, materialism, judgmentalism, egoism, escapism, racism, sexism.

If we open our hearts through prayer, fasting and almsgiving, the darkness will come into the light and our hearts will be changed. We need to recognize the need we have for change, and the longing our God has to put new hearts within us.

How do we spend this Season Apart — Lent, 1990? That's a personal question we each need to respond to in a spirit of prayer and reflection. It is a most serious time, a time to know that the tenderness of our God enfolds us and graces us to step out into greater freedom.

As we received the common symbol of ashes on our foreheads, so we begin the common yet unique personal journey of the season. The faithfulness of the community supports us.

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