

# Teen reflects on jail time for 'rescue mission'

By Jennifer Willems  
Catholic News Service

OMAHA, Neb. — Jennifer Supancheck didn't plan to spend the summer in jail in Fargo, N.D. It just sort of worked out that way.

While it wasn't a pleasant experience, she said she'd do it again to save more mothers and babies from what happens at abortion clinics.

The 18-year-old Omahan was one of 105 people arrested and jailed this summer during five protests at the Fargo Women's Health Organization, North Dakota's only abortion clinic. The protests were organized by the national group Lambs of Christ.

It marked her fourth arrest and second time in jail.

Supancheck was charged with criminal trespass and obstructing police. She had been told to expect possibly a week's stay, but ended up serving 102 days in North Dakota correctional facilities.

Released Sept. 9, she returned to Omaha Sept. 23 and recently started back to work.

"It was a good experience, looking back at it now," she recently told *The Catholic Voice*, newspaper of the Archdiocese of Omaha. "Sometimes I didn't think I would make it, but I still have that inner peace. I had a sense of inner peace from the first day I decided to go with the Lambs."

For the last three years Supancheck has been praying the rosary outside Omaha abortion clinics and participating in Operation Rescue protests.



AP/Wide World Photos

A demonstrator with the Lambs of Christ is pulled from under a car while blocking traffic entering the Women's Health Clinic in Fargo, N.D. Aug. 15.

Supancheck said she became involved in the issue when she heard a woman from Women Exploited by Abortion speak about her abortion and the anguish she felt. JoAnn Supancheck also had been urging her daughter to pray the rosary at area abortion clinics with her on Saturday mornings.

"That woman's story touched me and the next time my mom asked me to go, I did. I've been going ever since," she said. "The thing I notice is that the girls who go in are my age and younger."

She became active in Students for

Life at Daniel J. Gross Catholic High School, where she graduated in 1991. In her junior year she became involved in Binghamton, N.Y.-based Operation Rescue as a "temporary blocker," meaning she helped block clinic entrances but left when police gave the final warning to disperse before arrest.

Her first arrest came at an Omaha clinic July 18, 1990, and was as much a surprise to her as it was to everyone else.

"I rescued with a close friend of

mine. I started out to be a temporary blocker and didn't realize I would stay until that minute," she said.

The July protest was followed by Rescues and arrests in Washington last November, Omaha last December and Des Moines, Iowa, last January, 1991. She was given three days probation for the Omaha action, but is appealing it to force the issue in the courts, she said.

Supancheck said her parents, Don and JoAnn, and older sister, Jody, were concerned when she became involved with Operation Rescue. When she wanted to protest with the Lambs of Christ, they all prayed and discussed it as a family.

"It brought me and my family a whole lot closer. It made me realize what I did have," Supancheck said.

Not all of her friends were as understanding, Supancheck said.

"I lost friends. They disagreed with what I was doing," she acknowledged. "Some felt abandoned. They couldn't believe I'd do that."

"But my real friends, the friends I knew were friends, were there through the whole thing."

She wants to continue in Operation Rescue and would like to put together some youth rescues.

Next fall she plans to go to the Franciscan-run University of Steubenville in Ohio, where she hopes to study child development with a major in humanities and Catholic culture.

## SCHEDULE: NINE DAYS OF PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE



Babette G. Augustin/Catholic Courier

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At Riverside Convention Center  
Ivan Dragicevic, Visionary from Medjugorje  
Rev. Joseph R. Catanise, Parochial Vicar, St. Charles Borromeo Church

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At St. Charles Borromeo Church  
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Mother of Sorrows Church

Sunday, December 1  
At St. Charles Borromeo Church  
Rev. Anthony P. Mugavero,  
Parochial Vicar  
St. Theodore Church

Monday, December 2  
At St. Charles Borromeo Church  
Sr. Marlene Vigna, RSM,  
Campus Chaplain  
Rochester Institute of Technology

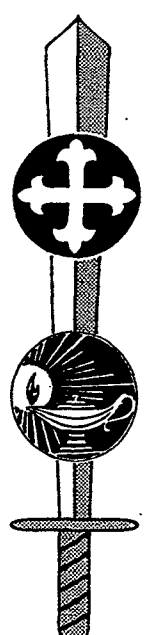
Tuesday, December 3  
At Sisters of Mercy Mother House  
Rev. Alexander H. Bradshaw,  
Pastor  
Holy Ghost Church

Wednesday, December 4  
At St. Charles Borromeo Church  
Rev. Albert J. Shamon,  
Spiritual Director  
Queen of Peace Apostolate

Thursday, December 5  
At Sisters of Mercy Mother House  
Rev. Terence K. Fleming,  
Pastor  
St. Charles Borromeo Church

Friday, December 6  
At St. Charles Borromeo Church  
Rev. Francis Blighton,  
Coordinator  
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Saturday December 7  
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