

Spring of Life



Kellie Mc Cann/Photo intern
The Rev. Paul Schenck speaks to pro-life troops gathered at a Main Street clinic April 25 in Buffalo.



Erik Kunkel/Photo intern
Holding a condom package in his hand, a pro-choice demonstrator (center) taunts a pro-life protester reading the Bible. The confrontation occurred during Operation Rescue's Spring of Life activities April 25 near a Main Street clinic in Buffalo.

Arrests top 400 as 'rescues' continue

By Lee Strong
Staff writer

Operation Rescue's "Spring of Life" campaign in Buffalo began its ninth day with a federal judge issuing bench warrants for the arrest of five Operation Rescue National leaders.

April 28 also featured a "rescue" at a High Street clinic, resulting in the arrest of 78 pro-life activists. Those arrests brought the total number of pro-life arrests to more than 410.

Also arrested at the protest were five pro-choice demonstrators, who reportedly attacked pro-life activists. An unidentified pro-life woman was hospitalized after allegedly being kicked and beaten. Her condition was not known as the *Catholic Courier* went to press.

U.S. District Court Judge Richard J. Arcara April 28 issued five bench warrants for the five Operation Rescue National leaders.

The five men must appear before Judge Arcara to show why they should not be held on contempt charges for violating the judge's ruling — issued prior to the protests — that pro-life activists had to stay more than 15 feet away from abortion clinics.

The warrants were issued for Joseph Slovenec, Jeff White, James Anderson, Joseph G. Kelley and Kenneth Reed.

No warrant was issued for Operation Rescue National director, the Rev. Keith Tucci, nor for Rochester-area rescue leaders.

According to Charlynn Anger, a spokesperson for the "Spring of Life," the five men were still in Buffalo, despite reports that they had left the city. "They are not leaving town," she said.

The rescuers arrested at the April 28 protests join approximately 240 pro-lifers activists in custody for protests during the first week of the Operation Rescue campaign.

Other highlights of the campaign's first week included:

- Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry's April 26 appearance at an Assembly of God Church in the Buffalo suburb of Amherst.

- Concerns voiced by Buffalo and Erie County officials about the growing cost of the rescues.

Meanwhile, both pro-life and pro-choice forces are claiming success.

"The clinics have been kept open,"



Kellie Mc Cann/Photo intern
A man from Boston kneels at the side entrance of the Buffalo GYN Womenservices Clinic on Main Street April 25. He was arrested along with 41 other demonstrators.

declared Darci Restino of Buffalo United for Choice. "Every scheduled patient has gotten in."

"We know we have seven confirmed babies saved," asserted Sharon Smith of the "Spring of Life" rescue. "That means seven women — two of them had literature given out at abortion clinics during the rescues — who have come to pro-life counseling centers to seek help in having their babies."

The first large-scale rescue in the campaign — which began April 20 — took place April 22 at a clinic on Sweet Home Road in Amherst. During the rescue, 191 pro-life protesters were arrested.

Among those arrested was Carol Crossed, a parishioner of Rochester's Corpus Christi Church. She posted \$1,000 bail April 26 due to ill health.

An additional 71 rescuers were arrested April 24 at Buffalo GYN Womenservices on Main Street. On April 25, 80 more pro-life activists were arrested at the same site.

Of those arrested, 240 remain in police custody. Police have said those not posting bail will be held until the scheduled May 15 court date.

On April 26, Randall Terry, who is preparing to launch a national radio program, made his first appearance in Buffalo since the protests began. He spoke to an estimated 800 people at the Evangel Assembly of God Church

in Amherst, urging them to continue their rescue efforts and to get involved in politics to change the nation's direction.

Terry reportedly returned to his home in Binghamton, after the April 26 appearance. It is not clear whether he will participate in any of the protests.

Meanwhile, officials of the City of Buffalo and Erie County are saying their community is being hurt financially by the protests.

County officials estimate that overtime pay for sheriff's deputies and the cost of housing arrested protesters is running approximately \$14,000 per day. The city comptroller's office has not yet tallied the actual day-to-day cost of the protests for the city, but estimated that overtime cost for officers alone would be approximately \$45,000 if the protests run the expected two weeks.

In addition to the actual rescues, the Spring of Life campaign includes a new weapon in the pro-life arsenal: Operation John the Baptist. This effort involves revealing the names of doctors who perform abortions and making the public aware of what abortion entails, Smith said.

The first part of the project has been accomplished through radio advertisements naming the doctors, and through media coverage of the protests, Smith said. In addition, pro-life activists have gone to doctors' homes to picket and pray.

A controversial part of that effort was the display of a fetus — which pro-life activists allege had been aborted — by the Rev. Robert Schenck on April 21 during a protest.

Smith said that showing the fetus, "exposed the idea that abortion kills children. It's not just 'medical waste.'"

Crossed likewise defended the action, pointing to controversies over displaying pictures of those injured and killed during the atomic bombing of Hiroshima during World War II.

"It's the same thing," Crossed said. "It's a very ugly and distasteful sight."

"But I think the truth of abortion is what he was holding in his hands," Crossed asserted. "That's what the people on the abortion side do not want to face."



Kellie Mc Cann/Photo intern
Pro-life advocate Hetty Pasco of Buffalo (left) accuses a pro-choice demonstrator — who identified herself only as "Kym of Chicago" — of committing genocide by promoting the abortion of black babies. The two were among hundreds of demonstrators who clashed April 25 at a clinic on Buffalo's Main Street.