

Cardinal joins in first vigil at abortion clinic

By Tracy Early
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK — Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York, who chairs the bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, joined for the first time in a rosary prayer vigil at a Manhattan abortion clinic June 13.

His presence brought out hundreds of pro-choice activists, as well as a much larger representation from the pro-life community.

Bishop Thomas V. Daily of Brooklyn, who will begin his third year of monthly vigils June 27 at Planned Parenthood in Brooklyn, also participated.

The event proceeded without any serious disruption, but police reported giving 11 summonses to demonstrators who sat in front of the procession to the clinic or otherwise sought to interfere. One of them was also cited for resisting arrest.

Helpers of God's Precious Infants, which was founded by Monsignor Philip J. Reilly of Brooklyn in 1989 to promote prayer at abortion clinics, sponsored the event and enlisted some supporters from outside the New York area.

The vigil began with an 8 a.m. Mass at St. Agnes Church, near Grand Central Station, celebrated by Cardinal O'Connor. The church was packed, and the pastor, Monsignor Eugene V. Clark, estimated that it had 950 people

upstairs and 500 in the lower church.

Others joined the procession to the clinic, where police estimated there were 2,500 vigil participants and 800 counterdemonstrators.

During his homily, Cardinal O'Connor strongly underscored a commitment to engage only in prayer, and forgo any attempt to block access to the clinic, confront women coming to it or respond to abortion supporters.

He reported that police had received a call from a woman who threatened to shoot him. And he recalled that in 1987, after a man threatened to bomb the same clinic that was the object of the vigil, Eastern Women's Center Abortion Clinic, he made a successful televised appeal for the man to turn himself in.

"We must never use violence to oppose violence," he said. "Violence begets violence."

Cardinal O'Connor also repeated earlier statements that he had never condemned a woman for getting an abortion, and repeated his offer of medical and other assistance for any woman with a problem pregnancy. "We are here in complete peace, with malice toward none, with charity for all," he said.

Monsignor Reilly said his group did not use the civil disobedience tactics of Operation Rescue, but that the two groups were not in conflict.



AP/Wide World Photos

Pope John Paul II prays in the Nossa Senhora de Fatima cathedral in Benguela, Angola June 9. The pope compared the torture, kidnapping and assassinations of Roman Catholics during Angola's civil war to the trials of early Christian martyrs.

Pope promotes spiritual values as cure for Angola

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

LUANDA, Angola — Pope John Paul II spent a week in war-scarred Angola, promoting spiritual values as a cure for ideological conflict and mistrust.

"Stay on the path that leads to unity and truly fraternal reconciliation," he said, before departing June 10. "It pleases God to see love and harmony in your hearts, your homes, your squares and your institutions."

The pope's message lit up a horizon of hope for a population that has barely begun to recover from 16 years of civil war. The trip offered a visible sign that the country's rival factions might be prepared to work together.

"There was no attempt to exploit this visit, by any side," said Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls.

Soon after his arrival in the capital city of Luanda June 4, the pope met jointly with President Jose Eduardo dos Santos and Jonas Savimbi. Until last year the two leaders were arch-enemies, with Savimbi's UNITA guerrillas battling dos Santos' Marxist one-party state.

They remain political opponents today, but have signed a peace accord. Their soldiers are disarming, and the nation's first democratic elections are scheduled for September. Their handshake in front of the pope sent a powerful image of cooperation.

The pope praised the peace agreement and throughout the trip preached a running sermon against violence.

To children in the southern city of Lubango June 5, the pope said the lesson against war was all around them.

"Take a look. It has provoked so much trouble, so much suffering, and now there are many children without fathers or mothers," he said.

Visiting the devastated inland center of Huambo the same day, the pope stood on a former execution site and implored the country to close the door on the "useless sufferings" of war.

Later, he blessed Laurinda Ciningila, a 29-year-old mother of two who lost both legs when she stepped on a mine near her home.

"I thank God for sending the pope here. Maybe he will help bring peace," she said.

It was a fragile hope, but fragile hopes are all Angolans have right now. Everywhere the pope went, in fact, priests and missionaries said shootings and banditry were on the increase, and many expressed doubt that elections would come off as planned.

When the pope visited a hospital in Luanda June 7, he found that all the surgical ward patients had bullet wounds. The facility had been given a fresh coat of paint but lacked basic medicines, including antibiotics to treat the many children with skin infections. Missionaries said most medical supplies end up on Angola's black market.

The pope recognized that his visit could not, by itself, heal the country's wounds or solve its problems. In Luanda June 7, he raised an emotional cry of sympathy.

"How I would like to give hope and courage to all those who feel oppressed! To cancel from the hearts of children and young people those horrible images of blood and destruction!" he said.

Exiled Ukrainian church leader speaks in Trumansburg

TRUMANSBURG — After escaping from prison nine times, Josyp Terelya now visits jails voluntarily.

Through his visits the exiled leader of the Ukrainian Catholic Church attempts to furnish prisoners not with breaking-out tips, but with spiritual support.

"I speak about prayer, faith and God, and not giving up hope," Terelya said last Saturday, June 13, at St. James the Apostle Church, 17 Whig St.

Speaking through an interpreter, the 48-year-old Terelya, who now lives in Toronto, addressed about 100 people.

Because of his religious beliefs, Terelya was a prisoner of the Soviet gulag for most of the years between 1962 and 1986. He was jailed and sometimes tortured over that period — including seven years spent in solitary confinement — before he was deported in 1987.

Since that time, Terelya has concentrated his efforts on prison ministry as well as halting the spread of pornography in the Toronto area. In addition

to being invited to the White House, he has testified before the Congressional Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Terelya told the St. James audience that he wishes to return to his homeland — especially since, with the fall of Communism in the former Soviet Union, religious choice is now tolerated.

Still, he has been told by government officials that he probably won't be allowed to return until at least 1997.

"There is religious freedom — why doesn't (Russian President Boris) Yeltsin let me come home?," he wondered.

"They're not anxious to have him back, obviously," observed Father Robert J. Kanka, pastor at St. James.

Terelya encouraged his listeners not only to pray, but to also act on those prayers.

"If we pray only, and don't live out our beliefs, then the world will slip away from God," he warned.

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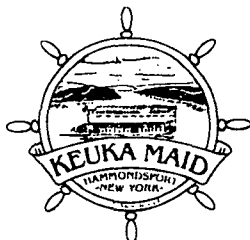
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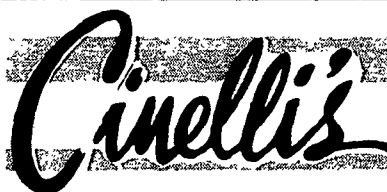
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