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Peace parade

Scores of young people issued profound appeals for peace during a conference at Brighton's Seton Catholic Junior High last week. The event was held in conjunction with Monroe County's Education for Peace Week. Page 15.

Museum recounts Holocaust Visitors see terror from victims' view

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum not only recounts the deaths of millions of victims of World War II, but it presents a lesson for all people, according to Jewish and Catholic leaders.

"It tells a crucial story, summing up the underside of the 20th century," said Eugene J. Fisher, associate director of the Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

He called the new museum's role "extremely important" in "helping all Christians remember what can happen if we're not extremely vigilant."

The nation's only memorial museum to the Holocaust was dedicated April 22, a surprisingly dreary and cold day for spring, at a ceremony attended by several world leaders and a crowd of about 10,000.

Dedicated amid Washington's many galleries, monuments and other museums, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum gives a stark account of the extermination of at least 6 million Jews and others. But it also gives faces to these unfathomable numbers to etch the devastation in the visitors' minds.

Posted within the permanent exhibit are photos of men and women with shaved heads in striped prison uniforms, emaciated and weary. But almost more piercing are the photos of Jewish men, women and children unaware of their impending doom.

Visitors stand inside a three-story tower within the museum that contains about 1,500 photo-album pictures taken in the 1920s and '30s in the small Lithuanian town of Ejszyszki. The pictures themselves are ordinary; the men, women and children posed in groups or alone, sometimes laughing, often serious. They sat before a camera's eye on a swing, in a field with a lover or with a group of friends or family.

But the photographs hauntingly speak of life and love prematurely cut off. Only 29 of Ejszyszki's 3,500 Jews escaped death by the Nazis during two days of September 1941 when the townspeople were stripped, shot and thrown into ditches.

Included in the three floors of the permanent exhibit are artifacts as simple as ID cards and prayer shawls and as chilling as a desecrated Torah ark and canisters that once held the deadly chemicals used in Nazi gas chambers.

Visitors can walk through railway car 31599-G that carried hundreds of
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Irving Simon and Arthur Rosen, Polish Jewish survivors of Nazi death camps, look on as Rosen's wife, Helen, also a survivor, reflects on the bricks memorializing Holocaust victims and the camps at which they died. The memorial is located at the Jewish Community Center in Brighton.

Survivors of Nazi horrors recall tales of inhumanity

Story by
Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — Cattle.

Flies.
When such creatures come to mind, most people think of food to be eaten and pests to be exterminated.

Men.
Women.
When such words come to mind, most people imagine themselves, their offspring, or someone else's.

Irving Simon and Arthur and Helen Rosen all know what happens when men become cattle and women become flies. They know because Simon and the Rosens survived Nazi Germany's attempt to kill every Jew in Europe.

The three Polish Jews — all U.S. citizens now — repeatedly used the words "cattle" and "flies" when describing how they lived and how others died in the Jewish ghettos and labor camps, and finally, in such death camps of Dachau, Germany, and Auschwitz, Poland.

They lived as cattle because they were often packed into trains for transporting purposes, their arms tattooed with identification numbers.

They saw others die like flies around them daily, hourly, from fatigue, disease, malnutrition, exposure, bullets, hanging, electrocution, gas and torture.

One of them noted that he learned to even fall asleep on dead bodies in the death camps, so accustomed did he become to the continual degrada-

tion they suffered.

"It's very painful," Arthur Rosen said as he, his wife and Simon related how they lost most of their family members to the Nazis and their non-German collaborators. "Our parents didn't die normally."

Arthur then added what drives him, his wife and friend to talk to anyone willing to listen about the Holocaust.

"We're not here looking for pity," he said. "We feel some kind of an obligation. We have to protect the future (by telling) people what really happened in the past."

What really happened still stuns the listener despite years of hearing about the Holocaust through history books and the news media. Each member of the trio had literally scores of their own tales of inhumanity to relate.

"They did whatever they wanted to do," Helen Rosen shrugged about her Nazi captors.

Prior to being shipped to the concentration camps, Jews were routinely rounded up by the Nazis in each Polish town, the three survivors recalled.

Helen Rosen said she was shipped first as a teen-ager to a Jewish ghetto in Lodz before she was sent to Auschwitz.

Her husband, whom she met after the war, was first sent to a labor camp after the Germans split

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