

Football player's wife now rues her abortion

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — In the party house lobby just one room over, a TV was showing the Buffalo Bills' 19-10 victory over the New York Jets.

Yet although Barbara Metzelaars cared greatly about the game's outcome, she never glanced at the screen. She told a crowd of about 300 this past Sunday, Oct. 24, that her mission that day took priority over seeing her husband, Pete, play for the Bills.

"I'd much rather be doing something like this than watching football," she stated to those gathered at the Maple Party House, 1020 Maple St. The gathering marked the first-ever "Fall In for Life" banquet, which was sponsored by several Rochester-area pro-life organizations.

Metzelaars was even more candid when she led into the subject matter of her appearance.

"I'm a murderer — as surely as (convicted serial killers) Jeffrey Dahmer or Ted Bundy," she declared.

Metzelaars was referring to an abortion she had 12 years ago. She and her husband, the Bills' starting tight end, now lecture frequently about that decision made early in their marriage — one which they bitterly regret.

"I'd decided I knew what was best for me. God was totally shut out of my life," she remarked.

Her voice choking with emotion, Metzelaars graphically described the ensuing guilt which still haunts her to this day.

"I've spent the last 12 years killing myself," she commented. "We can ask forgiveness from God and receive it, but it's much harder for us to forgive ourselves."

Yet through her faith in God, Metzelaars said she has found the courage to make public appearances denouncing abortion.

The Metzelaars now have two sons: 10-year-old Anthony and 6-year-old Jonathan.

After the lecture, Metzelaars told the *Catholic Courier* that this was the first time in her husband's 12-year professional football career that she hasn't watched one of his games either in person or on television.

She added that when they'd discussed the time conflict with her Rochester appearance and his Bills' road game against the Jets, he'd encouraged her to "Go for it."

The "Fall In for Life" program also included a talk by Monsignor James Lisante, a well-known priest, author and television personality from the Diocese of Rockville Centre, Long Island.

Monsignor Lisante shared his own familial experience regarding abortion. He related that his younger sister, Patty, once got as far as an abortion-clinic table before changing her mind and deciding to have her baby — despite heavy pressure from her husband to go through with the abortion. She later gave birth to a son, Matthew, now 9 — yet the turn of events led to a divorce.

Monsignor Lisante encouraged the audience to continue speaking loudly in the fight against legalized abortion.

"I think we are the counter-culture, and God bless us for being the counter-culture," he remarked.

A check for \$20,000 was presented that day by Monsignor Lisante, on behalf of the Rockville Centre diocese, to Geraldine Oftedahl, chairperson of both the New York State and Rochester Area Right to Life committees.

The afternoon ended with a special award being given to Father John T. Reif, one of this event's chief organizers, for his ongoing support of pro-life efforts. Father Reif serves as pastor of St. Rita Church, 1008 Maple Drive, Webster.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer



'Barney' visits children's fest

Donna Roe (top) paints her daughter Staci's nose during the Children's Festival at St. Patrick's School in Seneca Falls Oct. 23. At left, 3-year-old Jimmy Wood (right) gives 'Barney' a kiss while another young admirer offers a hug. Sponsored by the H.B. Fuller Co., the festival benefited the Finger Lakes Office of Social Ministry.

Cardenal

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In 1977, some members of the Solentiname community attacked a nearby National Guard barracks while Father Cardenal was out of the country. The National Guard retaliated and destroyed the community.

During his talk at Nazareth, Father Cardenal said that revolution does not necessarily require violence and that a great deal depends on the situation. The Sandinistas now advocate a non-violent approach, he said. And, he noted, former guerrilla groups in El Salvador and Guatemala are adopting the Sandinista approach.

Father Cardenal acknowledged that he is a Marxist. He defined Marxism as simply the doctrines of Karl Marx, the German social philosopher and economist who founded modern socialism. He added that Christianity is based on Jesus' doctrines. And, he noted, both

Marxism and Christianity have led to abuses.

It was his own Christian beliefs that helped to lead him to Marxism, Father Cardenal continued. Jesus had spoken of a perfect society, as did Marx, and it was his reading of the Gospels that led him to first read Marx, he said.

Father Cardenal said he has not been involved in government affairs since the Sandinistas' electoral defeat. The center he currently directs, however, carries on much of the cultural work he did as minister of culture under the Sandinistas. The current government, he explained, does not have the money to carry out these activities.

He also remains suspended from priestly ministry.

The Vatican had issued directives in the late 1970s and early 1980s that priests could not hold government posts, but Father Cardenal had continued to hold office with the Sandinista government.

During a 1983 visit to Nicaragua,

Pope John Paul encountered Father Cardenal, who dropped to his knees and reached for the pope's hand. Instead, the pope shook his finger at Father Cardenal and publicly chastised him. Father Cardenal was officially suspended from priestly ministry in 1985.

In a 1992 interview with Catholic News Service, Father Cardenal said he would not renounce his Sandinista activities just to regain his priestly faculties. Supporting a revolution on behalf of the people, he claimed, was a priestly function.

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ITHACA — Immaculate Conception School, 320 W. Buffalo St., is in need of volunteer tutors for elementary and middle-school students in subjects such as English, math and reading.

Volunteers are asked to commit at least one hour per week. Those interested should call Dianne Schmidt at 607/257-6316.

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