

WORLD & NATION

Walkers trek across U.S., calling for abortion's end

By Henrietta Gomes
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — After a 3,100-mile trek across the country to call for an end to abortion, a group of pro-life walkers called Crossroads reached Washington from the West Coast Aug. 9.

One of them even suffered a snakebite as the group, primarily made up of college-age volunteers, spent the summer on a pilgrimage walking across the United States to be a witness to the pro-life movement.

At a Mass celebrating their safe arrival at the Crypt Church of the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, Auxiliary Bishop

Francisco Gonzalez Valer of Washington said the need to respect life is what life itself is all about.

"Life is a gift from God, and because it is a gift from God, we must proclaim it," he added.

He commended the walkers on following the words of St. Francis of Assisi who once said, "Preach the Gospel at all times, and when necessary use words." That was what the walkers did, said the bishop about the young pilgrims who wore T-shirts with the word "PRO-LIFE" emblazoned on them as their continuous witness to those who saw them on the streets.

Joined by an Australian priest, the walkers represented the states of Maryland,

New York, New Jersey, Ohio, North Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas and Colorado.

The walkers, most of them born after the *Roe vs. Wade* decision that legalized most abortions in 1973, consider themselves to be survivors of the "abortion holocaust."

"I want to do all that I can to end the culture of death," said Mary Paul Gary-Lewis, 19, who was bitten by a copperhead snake while the group was in Macon, Ga., one of its stops.

After the members of Crossroads stopped in her home town of Denver, Kirstin Holum felt inspired to join the group in continuing the cross-country walk to bring an end to abortion.

"This was the most amazing experience of my life," said Holum, 22.

Not all the experiences were happy ones. The walkers ran into "two types of people, the pro-lifers and the pro-choicers," said Mary Worthington, 19, of Charlotte, N.C., who recalled being welcomed into the homes of pro-life supporters who showed kindness and hospitality.

Worthington also recalled being tormented by the screams, shouts and curses of many of the supporters of legal abortion they encountered.

Regardless of the suffering and sacrifice that the group had to deal with, Gary-Lewis said, "It was totally worth it. Snakebite and all, it was worth it."

Now Accepting Reservations!

A new choice in senior living. From a trusted friend.

There's no substitute for 100 years of experience. That's what St. Ann's Community brings to Cherry Ridge, our new residential senior living community coming to Webster — along with the security, quality of life and health services for true peace of mind. Nestled in nature but close to everything you may want or need, Cherry Ridge lets you live the full, active life you've always imagined, in the company of friends.

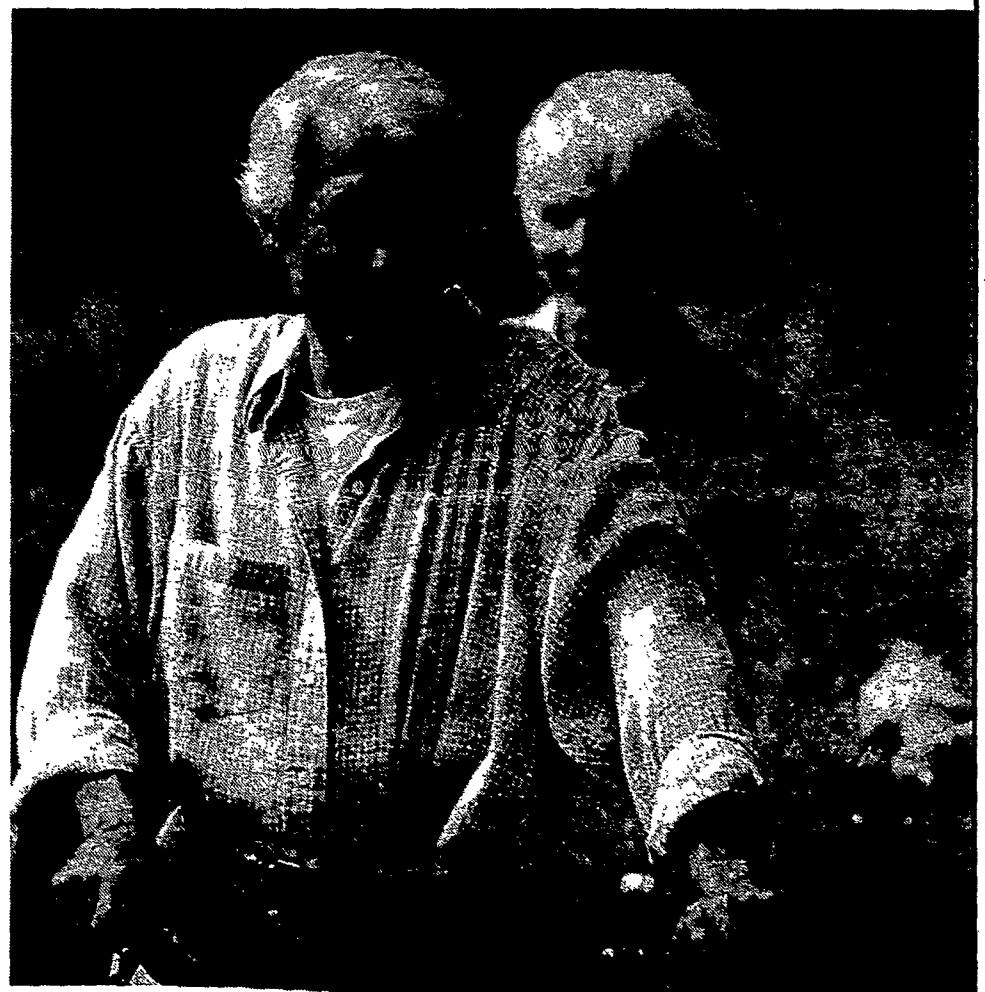


Cherry Ridge
a St. Ann's Community

Cottages • Apartments • Assisted Living

Information Center

876 Ridge Road • Webster, NY 14580 • www.cherryridgecommunity.com



To learn more, call 585.697.6700.

