

Workers ride for equal civil rights

LOS ANGELES (CNS) — Like its namesake of 40 years ago, this fall's Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride focuses on civil rights and equal access for all to benefits many take for granted.

But the catch-phrase for many of the riders on the three buses setting out from Los Angeles Sept. 23 was not "I have a dream," but its Spanish version, *Tengo un sueno*.

Buses carrying about 900 people were to set out from 10 cities the same day and make dozens of stops for rallies across the country before converging in Washington and New York in early October.

Organizers expect 100,000 people or more at a concluding rally Oct. 4 in Flushing Meadows, N.Y.

Much of the organizational work behind the freedom ride's nine bus caravans across the country has come from various labor unions. But churches, immigrants' and civil rights groups, and social-service agencies are also among the organizers.

Among church leaders endorsing the ride have been Catholic religious orders, individual parishes, priests and bishops including New York Cardinal Edward M. Egan.

On Sept. 29, a caravan of three buses carrying 135 immigrant freedom riders from Chicago stopped for a rally at Brockport's Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church in the Diocese of Rochester, N.Y. As the freedom riders stepped off the bus, they were greeted with chants of *Si se puede*, which in Spanish means "Yes we can."

Jim Bertolone, president of the Rochester Area Local No. 215 union, spoke to the crowd gathered, expressing the hope that this freedom ride will "expose the injustice of current policies toward immigrants."

"The road to citizenship needs a new map. We are here to draw that new map," Bertolone said.

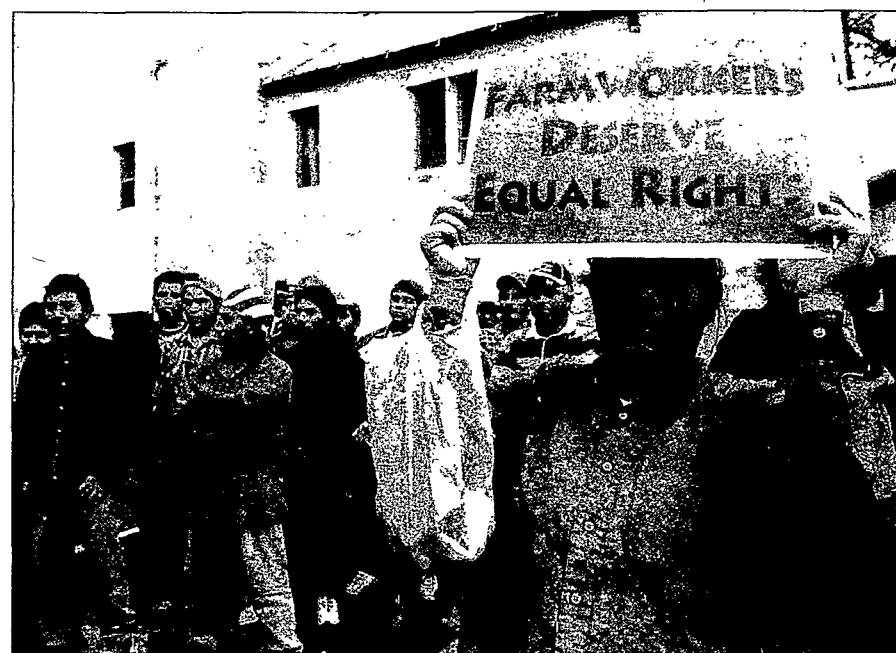
Michael Monaghan, a parishioner at St. Bridget's Parish in Rochester, was at the rally in support of the area's migrant farm workers.

"I just think they're one of the working populations that is the most under-represented. They don't have a voice," he said.

He suggested raising food prices to allow farmers to give the workers more necessities, such as adequate health care.

"We all appreciate the food they pick for us. I know I wouldn't mind paying a little more," Monaghan said.

Organizers estimated that almost 300 people, including the freedom



Karin von Voigtlander/Catholic Courier

Farm worker Marisela Saucedo and others rally for migrant rights Sept. 29 at Brockport's Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church. The rally was part of a national Immigrant Worker Freedom Ride that made a stop in the diocese.

riders, attended the rally. Bill Abom, western New York coordinator for Rural and Migrant Ministry, was pleased with the turnout.

"It's empowering for the workers to come together to demand their rights. It's important that the rest of the community knows what's happening, to understand the issues better. Hopefully through these things, change will happen," Abom said.

Abom also said that after the freedom riders from Chicago got back on the buses to leave, they spontaneously took up a collection for the local farm workers.

"The workers that were here came right from the fields, and from picking. They (the freedom riders) were moved by that, and so they took up a collection on their behalf to support the organizing work of the farm

workers here," Abom said.

After the workers left Brockport, they headed to Colgate Rochester Divinity School, where they were to have dinner and meet with area supporters.

Organizers of the ride say immigrant workers want the right to apply for legal citizenship, to reunify their families and to organize for better working conditions. They say immigration laws are cumbersome, confusing and outdated to meet the nation's ongoing need for workers and make it difficult for poor people from other countries to immigrate.

Estimates are that between 8 million and 15 million people live in the United States illegally.

Contains reporting by Jennifer Burke in Rochester.

OCTOBER SPECIALS

LUNCH

Soup and Sandwich
Our chef creates a new and interesting combination each and every day.

Beggars Purse
Filo dough filled with langoustines, scallops and crab in a red bell pepper sauce

Catch of the Day
Each day the Lamplighter features a new seafood selection.

Chicken Madeira
Breast of chicken sautéed with Portabello mushrooms and served in a rich Madeira wine sauce

Lunch specials are served with a choice of soup or salad.

DINNER

Rack of Lamb
Marinated in balsamic and crusted with Dijon, makes my mouth water just to talk about it.

Portofino
Lobster, shrimp, scallops and crabmeat sautéed in olive oil and white wine served with artichokes and black olives over a bed of pasta

Grilled Veal Chop (14 oz.)
This fusion creation is marinated in Chinese herbs, served on the bone with a Madeira wine sauce.

Caribbean Chicken
Chicken sautéed with lime, butter and Meyers rum.

All dinners are served with a tossed salad

Lunch: Tuesday - Friday 11:30 to 2:00
Dinner: Monday - Saturday 4:30 to 10:00
Early Bird Specials: Mon.-Thurs. 4:30 to 6:00

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Project Rachel priest to give talk

Father Jim Hewes, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Parish in Clyde, will speak about respecting all life from 6-7 p.m. at Geneva's St. Stephen's Church, 48 Pulteney St., on Respect Life Sunday, Oct. 5.

The event, which is free and open to the public, will include a prayer service and refreshments following Father Hewes' talk.

Coordinator of the post-abortion healing ministry Project Rachel, Father Hewes said his speech will be based on such themes as the nonviolence of Jesus; the reasoning behind Catholic opposition to the death penalty; and the need for healing after abortion.

"It is natural to respond to violence with rage and revenge, but the only hope for us to stop the spread of the

fires of violence is to live the way of Jesus' nonviolent love that continues to offer love and forgiveness to every person, even one's worst enemy," Father Hewes observed in one of several essays he has written on nonviolence.

Father Hewes is a longtime advocate of the church's consistent life ethic, which opposes as threats to life abortion, war, euthanasia, the death penalty, poverty and racism. In 1968, he became one of the original board members for Rochester Area Right to Life. That group later formed Birthright of Rochester, which assists women in crisis pregnancy situations. In addition, Father Hewes engaged SUNY Geneseo students in pro-life causes while serving as Catholic chaplain there from 1987-99.

Father Hewes served as chairman of the diocesan Human Life Commission from 1977-84. He became involved in Project Rachel after it came to the Rochester Diocese in 1996, and has led training for Project Rachel volunteers since 1998. Project Rachel, which originated in the Archdiocese of Milwaukee in the mid-1980s, offers one-on-one counseling for women who have had and men who have been affected by abortions.

In addition, Project Rachel will present a Rachel's Vineyard retreat for persons affected by abortion at St. Charles Borromeo Prayer Center in Greece Nov. 14-16. To learn more, visit www.ggw.org/ProjectRachel/, or call 888/9-RACHEL (972-2435).

— Rob Cullivan

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