



Metro/Religion

Faith groups gather to explore farm workers justice

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Members from congregations across Oregon will gather in Portland on Sunday, June 25, for a four-hour workshop called "Worked of the Land, your People will be my People" offering information and insights about farm workers in Oregon and the religious community's response to community needs. Sponsored by Ecumenical ministries of Oregon and the Oregon Farm Worker Ministry, workshop will be held from 2 to 6 p.m. at St. Luke Lutheran Church, 6835 SW 46th Avenue. The \$45 registration fee covers the cost of materials.

Workshop highlights include: How the biblical story relates to the stories of farm workers what justice for farm workers would look like, what it would take to obtain such justice, and how farmers, farm workers, farm worker and people of faith can work together to benefit all.

EMO is a statewide association of 15 denominations, including Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox religious bodies, working together to improve the lives of Oregonians. For more information about the workshop, or to register, call Elizabeth Pope at (503)221-1054

Thousands celebrate faith

ASSOCIATED PRESS

About 13,500 Roman Catholics gathered at Memorial Coliseum on Sunday for a mass celebration of the Eucharist, the holiest sacrament of the Catholic Church.

Catholics believe this year is the 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ, and Pope John Paul II has called for similar celebrations around the world.

Eucharist 2000 was the Archdiocese of Portland's largest event since the 1997 installation of the Most Rev. John G. Vlazny, archbishop of Portland, and the first big celebration he has presided over.

Vlazny greeted parishioners at the "Millennium Gate," a purple-and-white wooden arch built for the occasion and placed at the Coliseum's entrance.

Incense drifted through the air as he told them to "take part in this with reverence and a true spirit of joy. We as followers pledge ourselves to

promote justice and peace, forgive one another from our hearts and proclaim this day to all we meet."

Inside the Coliseum, the marchers wandered among booths offering cassette tapes of sermons and plastic fetuses meant to demonstrate the church's opposition to abortion.

At a late-afternoon Mass, Vlazny and about 80 priests took holy water into the Coliseum stands and sprinkled it on the participants to bless them. Church members read blessings in Korean, Polish, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian and American Sign Language.

"It is here we sense our closeness to God and one another. Here we know not a single one of us is a mistake," Vlazny said. "This is a time of reminding us to go forth and share and to make disciples."

A 1990 study estimated that less than one-third of the state's residents attended church regularly and ranked Oregon 49th nationally in church attendance.

Court sets aside ruling allowing prayer in Alabama county

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Supreme Court set aside a federal appeals court ruling Monday that let public school students in an Alabama county lead group prayers at graduations, assemblies and sports events.

The justices told the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to restudy the Alabama case in light of a major school-prayer decision they announced last week in a Texas case. In that ruling, the court said prayer in public schools must be private and that such prayers at high school football games violate the constitutionally required separation of church and state.

The Supreme Court's landmark 1962 decision outlawed organized, officially sponsored prayers in public schools. In 1992, the justices barred clergy-led prayers at public school graduation ceremonies.

The following year, Alabama

legislators enacted a law requiring public schools to allow student-initiated prayer at "compulsory or non-compulsory" school activities including sporting events, student assemblies and graduations.

In 1996, Michael Chandler and his son, Jesse, challenged the law and its enforcement in DeKalb County public schools.

They said Jesse's school let students lead Christian prayers in classrooms and over the intercom, and allowed students or clergy to lead prayers at graduations, football games and student assemblies. Gideon Bibles were handed out in classrooms by non-school personnel, they said.

A federal judge declared the law unconstitutional and barred all non-private prayer, including student-initiated prayer at graduations, assemblies and football games.

The 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed last July, saying courts could not prohibit "genuinely student-

initiated religious speech" at school events, including graduations, or impose restrictions greater than those on non-religious student speech.

The appeals court ordered the judge to rewrite the order, saying the court could bar school officials from encouraging student religious activity and appoint a monitor to ensure such actions do not recur. The court let stand the judge's ruling that declared the state law unconstitutional.

In the appeal acted on Monday, the Chandlers' lawyers said schools cannot "engage unwilling students in religious activity as part of school-controlled events."

"Truly private prayer neither seeks nor requires a microphone and an audience," the appeal said.

Lawyers for the state and county said the 11th Circuit court's ruling "gives genuinely private religious speech no greater privilege than genuinely private nonreligious speech."

Briefs

Dr. Johnny Pack IV to speak

Dr. Johnny Pack IV to be Keynote Speaker at M.W. Prince Hall Grand Lodge F. & A.M. of Oregon, Inc. & Prince Hall Grand Chapter O.E.S. of Oregon and Jurisdiction 40th and 39th Annual Banquet on Monday, June 26, 2000, at 7:00 p.m. at the Ramada Inn, 6221 N.E. 82nd Avenue. Donations \$35

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contact Gladys Young, Chairperson at 1 (503)285-1762.

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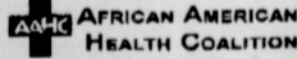
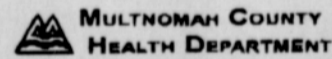
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