



NEWS ARCHIVE:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

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Pilgrims gather around Millennium Cross to pray for an end to abortion in annual event organized by Eparchy of Saskatoon Knights of Columbus

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

Pilgrims gathered around a 100-foot steel cross north of Aberdeen Aug. 23, 2009 to pray for an end to abortion.

This year's annual pilgrimage to the Millennium Cross included a relay walk, in which participants carried a small cross 46 kms from Saskatoon to the pilgrimage site, where it was presented to Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon. Bishop Bayda also participated in the walk.

The pilgrimage walk included a first leg on July 25, with some 31 youth walked from Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic parish to the site of the future Ukrainian Catholic Martyrs church on Attridge Drive, explained Joe Lozinsky, Secretary of the Millennium Cross Foundation. The Aug. 23 portion of the walk included people of all ages, including families and seniors, and went from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. he said.

During this year's 10th annual pilgrimage, Bishop Bryan Bayda also blessed a giant 260-foot rosary constructed by Joe Bayda and added to the Millennium Cross site this year. Volunteers at each bead prayed a "living rosary" during the Sunday afternoon program.

Guest speaker at this year's pilgrimage was Denise Hounjet-Roth of Campaign Life Coalition, which lobbies to have laws passed that will protect life from conception to natural death.



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When something is made legal, people begin to think that it is all right, Hounjet-Roth maintained, stressing the need for laws against abortion. “Often people’s perception is that if something is legal, it is okay,” she said.



Roth cited an article in Columbia Magazine about the situation in Poland, where abortion is now illegal. Even though there are a number of exceptions in the law, since it was enacted the number of abortions in Poland has decreased from more than 100,000 a year to about 360.

In Saskatchewan, there are some 1,730 abortions each year, killing the equivalent of a classroom of 34 babies a day, said Hounjet-Roth, a retired teacher. “In Canada we kill over 100,000 babies every year for any reason, at any time,” she said. “Now add to this that you and I, those of us who pay taxes, we pay for this (through) our tax dollars.”



Participants in a walk from Saskatoon to the Millennium Cross site north of Aberdeen at the 10th annual pro-life pilgrimage.

Hounjet-Roth noted the irony that parents must pay \$250 to have an infant son circumcised, because the procedure is deemed “medically unnecessary,” and yet abortions, which are rarely medically necessary, are funded.

“Campaign Life Coalition, the group that I work with, believes that having our tax dollars pay for abortions is wrong,” Hounjet-Roth said. “We also believe that health care workers should be able to opt out of doing abortions without fear of losing their jobs.”

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Bishop Bryan Bayda of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Saskatoon blessed the giant rosary that was added to the site this year.

The coalition was one of the groups lobbying for a law this past year that would see the murderer of a pregnant woman charged with two counts of murder, she related. The legislation did not go through, however. Expectations that pro-choice advocates might support such a law proved to be unfounded. Hounjet-Roth noted.

“We thought ... that even the so-called pro-choice people would support this law, because after all, they are supposed to be pro-choice and the woman chose to keep her baby, and therefore they should support her. But the fact of the matter is that the label ‘pro-choice’ is a lie. It is pro-abortion.”

Roth also spoke about efforts to introduce legislation to legalize euthanasia.

Two members of Silent No More also spoke briefly about the painful experience of undergoing an abortion.

Kelly Block, Member of Parliament for Saskatoon/Rosetown/Biggar also attended the event.

The Millennium Cross site was established in 1999 as a project of Saints Peter and Paul Ukrainian Catholic Knights of Columbus Council 11775, on land donated by member Joe Bayda. The first 33-foot high wooden cross was built on the hill near Highway 41 in October 1999. The annual pilgrimage to pray for victims of abortion began Oct. 15, 2000, and in July 2006, the larger steel cross was erected.