

Arrests mark demonstration at area clinic

BY GREG KOWALSKI
STAFF WRITER

Nearly 200 supporters and opponents of abortion marked Good Friday with a protest at the Mid-west Gynecologists' clinic on Woodward north of Square Lake Road in Bloomfield Township.

"This Good Friday signifies the day Jesus Christ laid down his life," said Christopher Piasecki. "People should realize that Christ is the source of life and loves everybody."

Piasecki is from St. Clair Shores, and the demonstration drew participants from as far as Ann Arbor and Columbus, Ohio.

"There is a massacre going on today, and the carnage is these babies," said John Swigart, from Toledo, Ohio. He came from the Friends of Our Lady pro-life group in Toledo.

'Form of slavery'

The demonstrators did not claim to represent any specific pro-life group.

"I would have helped blacks during the time of slavery," said Bob Duras, also from Toledo. "Today, abortion is a form of slavery."

The pro-lifers, including several children, sang songs and carried signs with such sayings as "Abortionists Kill Babies."

Although there were no major incidents of violence, police arrested more than 20 people for blocking the entrance to the clinic at 1771 Woodward, about three-quarters of a mile south of the Pontiac border. Two people were also arrested for fighting.

Bloomfield Township police executive Lt. Jeffrey Werner said police from that township, Birmingham, Pontiac, West Bloomfield and Oakland County Sheriff's Department were on the scene, blocking the entrance to the clinic parking lot off of Woodward.

Police responded to the demonstration beginning at about 7 a.m. and formed a line in front of the clinic doors to keep access open to patients. About 50 pro-choice

■ **'This Good Friday signifies the day Jesus Christ laid down his life.'**

Christopher Piasecki

demonstrators also carried signs, but were disgruntled with police because they were limited to the sides of the building.

No injuries

Werner said the police had to keep the people separated to avoid confrontations.

"Everything went very well. There were no injuries," Werner said.

Carol King, executive director of the Michigan Abortion Rights Action League, said her group was helping escort patients into the clinic.

"We are not here to confront anyone," said King. She also passed out fliers condemning the pro-life activists.

"Abortion is legal," the flier stated. "What is wrong with today's Operation Rescue is that these anti-abortion protesters not only feel they have the right to decide what health care options are appropriate for women, but by blocking access to a medical facility, they are breaking the law."

The league also objected to including children in the protest, arguing that because blocking the clinic entrance is illegal, the pro-life supporters are contributing to the delinquency of children.

Jason Vicker, who is visiting the area from Columbus, Ohio, also opposed the demonstration. "If they're against abortion, that's OK. But they shouldn't impose their belief on me. They don't have a right to harass women," he said.

Julie Nathan of West Bloomfield agreed.

"I think it's really pathetic. People have to be more open-minded. They have to respect the law."

No one at the clinic would comment on the demonstration.



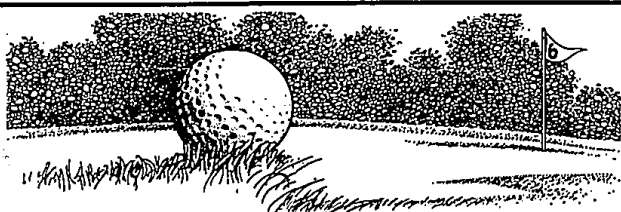
Offering prayers: Abortion foes Christopher Piasecki (center left) and Ken Jezierski were among those raising their arms in prayer and song at the demonstration against abortion.



Young protester: William Bushman, 10, took refuge behind his sign as a steady drizzle rained down on the demonstrators.



Arrested: Police from five departments moved swiftly, arresting anyone blocking doors to the clinic or not keeping within boundaries to allow free movement into the building, including this unidentified demonstrator.



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