



HOSPITALIZED: Cesar Chavez, suffering from hunger strike, being wheeled from Phoenix office last week. Associated Press

CHAVEZ ENDS FAST AT KENNEDY RITES

Says Sacrifices of Workers 'Will Not Be in Vain'

By ANTHONY RIPLEY

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PHOENIX, Ariz., June 4—Cesar Chavez, director of the United Farm Workers, ended his 24-day fast today with a bite of sacramental bread at a memorial mass for Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

More than 5,000 persons crowded into a ballroom at the Del Webb Towne House for the religious ceremony as Mr. Chavez, weak and comforted by Joan Baez, the singer, said through a spokesman:

"I am weak in my body but I feel very strong in my spirit."

Mr. Chavez, 45 years old, whose union is attempting to organize produce pickers in Arizona and a number of other states in the Southwest, began the fast May 11 to protest passage by the Arizona Legislature of a law banning strikes on farms at harvest time and outlawing secondary boycotts. The law takes effect Aug. 11.

In Yuma, Ariz., farm workers left the cantaloupe fields Wednesday on a strike and growers sent out a call for students to pick the ripe melons.

Last Wednesday, Mr. Chavez was admitted to Memorial Hospital here, suffering from weakness and dehydration. He had taken only water since the fast began at the Santa Rita Community Center in a Chicano district of South Phoenix.

Today, Mr. Chavez sat in the front row of the hall, often closing his eyes, sipping water from a paper cup. His physician, Dr. Jerome Lackner of San Jose, Calif., sat at his feet.

Nearby sat Joseph Kennedy 3d, 19, eldest son of the late Senator, who later told the audience, "It's an honor to stand here today with Cesar Chavez, where my father stood four years ago."

In a statement, Mr. Chavez said that the sacrifices of the farm workers "will not be in vain." He added:

"The fast was meant as a call to sacrifice for justice and as a reminder of how much suffering there is among farm workers. In fact, what is a few days without food in comparison to the daily pain of our brothers and sisters who do backbreaking work in the fields under inhuman conditions and without hope of ever breaking their cycle of poverty and misery?"

"What a terrible irony it is that the very people who harvest the food we eat do not have enough food for their own children."

Conditioning Worsening

Mr. Chavez was still wearing the hospital identification band on his left wrist and returned to his bed after the mass.

His physician, in a news conference before the mass, said that Mr. Chavez's condition was worsening.

"I've known Cesar on a person-to-person basis for six and a half years and I want to tell you that to look at his electrocardiogram yesterday and today as compared to earlier brings tears to my eyes."

Dr. Lackner said the normal heart sounds are clear and distinct, but those same sounds in Mr. Chavez were "mushy." He said Mr. Chavez weighed 167 pounds at the beginning of his fast and had lost 28 to 30 pounds.

The farm workers' leader, Dr. Lackner said, will be hospitalized at least two weeks "until we are confident he is O.K."

Some of those in the audience crowded around the young Mr. Kennedy before mass, reaching out to touch him. One man emotionally clasped the hand of the long-haired young man to his head.