

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

November 16, 1973

Washington, D.C.

The following resolutions were unanimously adopted by the Annual Meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, D.C. on November 16, 1973. This followed a one-hour discussion based on a presentation made by Bishop Joseph F. Donnelly, Chairman of the Bishops' Committee on Farm Labor. The resolutions read as follows:

- 1) It was moved and seconded that the National Conference of Catholic Bishops go on record in support of the right of the field workers in the agricultural industry to free secret ballot elections which will determine whether or not they want Union representation, and which union they want to represent them. The National Conference of Catholic Bishops calls upon the growers and the Teamsters to accede to this demand of the United Farm Workers of America without further delay. The motion was unanimously carried.
- 2) The National Conference of Catholic Bishops endorses and supports the UFW's consumer boycotts of table grapes and head lettuce until such time as free secret ballot elections are held. The motion was carried unanimously.

Report of Bishop Joseph F. Donnelly, Chairman of the Bishops' Committee on Farm Labor to the annual Meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C., November 16, 1973:

"Mr. Chairman and members of the conference: The Bishops' Committee on Farm Labor was established in November, 1969 at the annual fall meeting of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. The NCCB authorized the committee to study the table grape strike and empowered the members of the committee "to issue appropriate statements as in their estimation, the facts warranted."

"During the floor discussion of the committee's purpose and role, it was made a matter of official record that if the committee's efforts to persuade the parties to negotiate were unsuccessful, the NCCB was prepared to take further action. This meant, in context, that if necessary, the NCCB might at the appropriate time come out in favor of the boycott.

"Pursuant to this NCCB mandate, the Bishops' Committee held an extensive series of meetings in California with the top officers of the United Farm Workers and with a number of representative growers. As a result of these meetings, which extended over a period of several months, the parties eventually resolved their long-standing dispute in the table grape industry, through the normal processes of collective bargaining. Representatives of the Bishops' Committee, by invitation of the parties, sat in as observers at most of the bargaining sessions, and, in some cases, were called upon to mediate between the parties.

"In summary, I think it can be said that the Committee played an indispensable role in settling the table grape dispute.

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