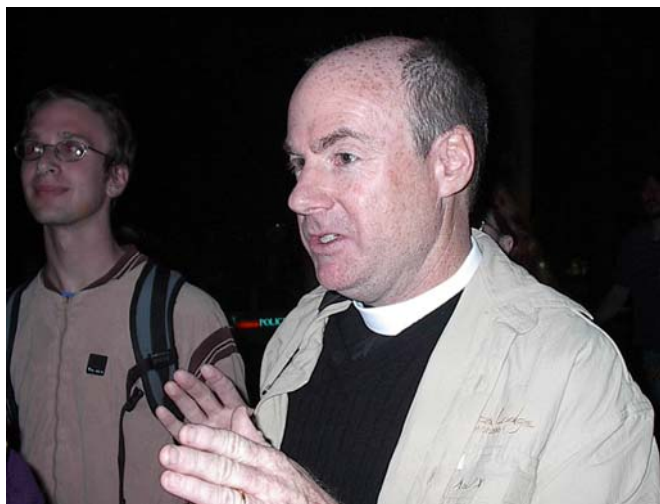


Episcopal clergy join protest, student sit-in supporting janitors at University of Miami



Fr. Frank Corbishley addresses supporters and media after the sit-in.
(Photo by Christina Encinosa)

(Miami, Fla., 3-29-06) At about 1:30 this morning a group of 17 students, accompanied by Fr. Frank Corbishley, rector of Chapel of the Venerable Bede and Episcopal campus chaplain at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, Fla., ended a more than 12-hour sit-in inside the university's Office of Admissions in support of striking janitorial workers.

Workers have been on strike since Feb. 28 against the university and UNICCO, the company that employs them for janitorial work on campus, demanding a living wage and benefits, as well as respect for their right to form a union.

The protest ended when the university issued a statement saying that it would not tolerate intimidation or coercion of workers and that it would host a meeting of all parties involved within 48 hours in order to seek an agreement on the issues raised by the workers.

The sit-in followed a noon protest yesterday that briefly shut down U.S. 1 a block from the university campus. Workers, students, faculty and clergy from the community, including six Episcopal priests and Assistant Bishop James Ottley, marched from the Episcopal Student Center on campus to the site of the protest, chanting, "*Si, se puede!*" (Yes, we can, or It can be done!) Several of the protesters—though none of the Episcopal clergy—sat down in the intersection and were quickly removed by police.

Ottley serves as president of the South Florida Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, which has supported the workers since they first began to organize last fall, and the Episcopal Student Center at the Chapel of the Venerable Bede has served as the "strike sanctuary", a gathering place for workers and their supporters since the strike began.

Corbishley and the students had said they would remain in the admissions office until forcibly removed or until university President Donna Shalala agreed to meet with them to discuss substantive action on the part of the university to address the workers' demands.

“This is an act of civil disobedience,” Corbishley said, “and Jesus’ overturning the tables of the money-changers in the temple was an act of civil disobedience. I’m doing this to follow my Lord.”

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