

Birth-Control Ban Protested by Pickets at St. Patrick's



The New York Times

Demonstrators outside St. Patrick's Cathedral, Fifth Avenue at 50th Street, yesterday

A small group of mothers, children and college students picketed yesterday in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral to protest the Roman Catholic Church's ban on artificial methods of birth control.

"It was the closest we could get to Rome without actually going there," William R. Baird, the leader of the demonstration, explained. Mr. Baird is the founder and director of the Parents' Aid Society which operates a birth-control clinic in Hempstead, L. I., and a mobile Plan Van that visits poor neighborhoods with birth control information and free equipment.

Mr. Baird, who is not a Roman Catholic, said he had

great admiration for the Catholic Church "especially its charities," but that its policy on birth control is "responsible for a lot of the world's suffering." Mr. Baird's wife and two of his four children were among the 14 pickets.

Although there was an antiwar demonstration outside Cardinal Spellman's Chancery on Madison Avenue in December, yesterday's was the first protest that could be recalled taking place before the cathedral itself.

There was no heckling from the noon-hour passers-by. Among the mutterers and headshakers were many who accepted leaflets with smiles.

One gray-haired stroller said, "Don't you let them fret you, dear," to a young woman carrying a placard that read, "I Am a Catholic and I Believe in Birth Control."

Mr. Baird was unsuccessful in his effort to see Cardinal Spellman. The Cardinal's secretary said later that he would be shown the pickets' appeal. Cardinal Spellman had no comment on the demonstration.

The appeal was for prompt action by Pope Paul VI on recommendations by his birth-control commission that reportedly favor a change in the present church prohibition of most contraceptive techniques.

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