

HANDOUT

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HEAD OF FARM WORKERS UNION ENDS 25-DAY FAST IN CALIFORNIA

DELANO, Calif., March 10

Cesar Chavez ended his fast today at an emotion-packed, religion-oriented labor rally in a public park.

More than 4,000 persons attended the open-air mass, mostly Mexican-American farm workers, as is Mr. Chavez, but others were there, such as Senator Robert F. Kennedy.

Senator Kennedy marched in a colorful union procession led by the large, wooden cross the farm workers carried on a march to Sacramento last spring.

The cross was followed by the picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patroness of the Mexican Revolution of 1911. The Senator marched between rows of farm workers bearing red flags with Mexican eagles printed on them, the insignia of the farm workers. Mr. Chavez, the architect and leader of the drive now to organize farm workers, had taken only water from Feb. 14 until last Wednesday.

At his doctor's insistence since Wednesday he has taken a few ounces of bouillon, unsweetened grapefruit juice and some medication. His doctor feared kidney damage from an imbalance of protein consumption. He weighed 140 pounds today, down 35 pounds during the fast.

CALLS FOR SELF-SACRIFICE

In a statement read at the mass, Mr. Chavez said he undertook the fast because "my heart was filled with grief when I saw the pain and suffering of the farm workers."

His sacrifice was in behalf of nonviolence, he said. He called for his colleagues and the union to look upon self-sacrifice as the ultimate act of manliness.

As his statement was read in Spanish, then English, Mr. Chavez sat alongside Senator Kennedy in the hot sun beneath the altar installed on a truck bed. A blanket covered his knees. Two men had supported him as he walked through the crowd to the altar.

"The world must know," said Senator Kennedy,

"that the migrant farm worker, the Mexican-American, is coming into his own right."

Mr. Kennedy, who had flown here from a Des Moines political dinner, repeated the Chavez warning that "violence is no answer."

The fast, its attendant emotional build up, and today's successful rally have come at a turning point in the drive to organize farm workers. The effort is to win recognition of the Giumarra Farms.

The Giumarra family grape holdings have been the target of Mr. Chavez's union since last August. This family produces premium table grapes on about 5,000 acres of vineyards scattered north and south of here in the Central Valley.

Selection of Giumarra as the organizing target came as the union began to exhaust the list of wine companies whose vineyards it could organize.

Boycotts of wine labels have been the successful device that has brought union recognition from such companies as Schenley Distilleries, the DiGiorio Fruit Company, Paul Masson Vineyards, Gallo Brothers, Christian Brothers winery and three smaller companies.

Total peak employment in these vineyards is about 3,500. California agriculture employs upward of 200,000 workers.

The union's attack on Giumarra was at two levels. First, it attempted to get field workers to walk out last August at harvest peak. Union sources said this met some success, but the workers were replaced. Mr. Giumarra said that fewer than 200 left.

The union's second attack is a national boycott attempt. About 50 union members, led by Dolores Huerta, union vice president, went to New York in January to talk to stores, fruit wholesalers and union groups.

This effort is directed at next July, when the new crop is ready for harvest and sale.

The United Auto Workers has been supporting the strike with \$5,000 a month and announced today a \$50,000 gift for a new building on a farm tract of 40 acres that the farm workers own.