

Service honors Holocaust victims

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More than 400 gather to remember those who died in 'world of horror'

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PROVIDENCE — The Rev. Edward Paul Doyle stood at the podium at Temple Emanu-El last night, describing in a soft voice the horrors he had seen.

It was April 11, 1945, and the Dominican priest, who had left his teaching post at Providence College to become an Army chaplain with the 104th Infantry Division, had just come upon a concentration camp in Nordhausen, Germany, freshly given up by a retreating German army.

"It was a world of horror, a world of tragedy, a world of death," the slim, white-haired priest said, recalling what it was like to be part of the army of liberators who would be among the first to see the Nazi atrocities which would soon stun the world.

"It is said that at Nordhausen, we discovered 6,000 'political prisoners.' Alas 5,000 of these prisoners were corpses ... emaciated, mutilated, scarred skeletons."



DOYLE

Last night, for the fifth consecutive year, more than 400 people gathered at Temple Emanu-El for an interfaith memorial service, a commemoration for the millions of Jews and others who had lost their lives in what the world now simply calls the Holocaust.

As in previous years, candles were lit — this time by four Holocaust survivors, Edwin O. Adler, Nina Newman, Rose Berger and Mrs. Meyer Spitzman, by two children of Holocaust survivors, Marion Wachtenheim and Lilliane Birch, and by Father Doyle, who lit a seventh candle in honor of the righteous of all nations.

It was an emotion-filled service, with prayers of mourning sung and recited in Hebrew, English and Yiddish. Rabbi Sholom L. Strajcher of the Providence Hebrew Day School slowly recited the names of many loved ones who had perished in "the Shoah," followed by a kaddish, a prayer for the dead in each of the 17 concentration camps, recited by Cantor Marcos Salman of Temple Emanu-El and the Rev. Elizabeth Endicott of Central Congregational Church.

A witness to others

Describing attempts by American GIs to



SCHWARTZ

save the lives of those who still breathed and moved amid the piles of bodies, Father Doyle said that if he ever needed a reason for leaving his classroom to go overseas as an Army chaplain, he found it that day 43 years ago.

"Nordhausen gave all the meaning to my life," he said, there, amid the utter, cruel and brutal disregard for human life which the atrocities represented, he saw ever more clearly how men and women were called to be instruments of love for God and neighbor.

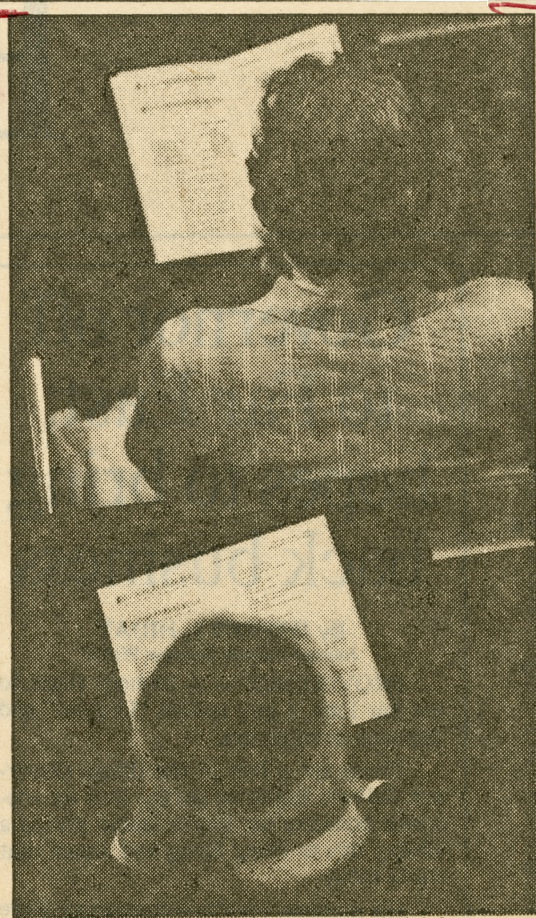
And he could be a witness to others. "I could tell the world that it was real, that it really happened."

Joseph Schwartz, a Holocaust survivor, offered his own perspective on the tragedy, saying that survivors "do not forgive or forget."

"The only ones that can forgive are the dead," he said. "The living have no right to forget."

His voice breaking with emotion, Schwartz told how he had lost his country, had almost lost his life, but regained his freedom by becoming a citizen of the United States.

"Unfortunately, history can repeat itself, and it can happen here," he declared. "Therefore, cherish your freedom. America is the last bastion of a free nation. If you lost your freedom and your country, where would you go?"



—Journal-Bulletin Photo by TIMOTHY C. BARMANN

IN MEMORIAM: Two participants sing at an interfaith service at Temple Emanu-El remembering those who died in the Holocaust.