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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LABOR RALLIES FOR SIX DISPLACED CEMETERY WORKERS

August 31, 2011 - Syracuse, NY- The Labor community will gather and rally around the six gravediggers who will be out of a job as of tomorrow. On June 20th, the workers whose combined average years of service total twenty, were told that the corporation that runs St.Mary and St.Agnes Cemeteries would be dissolved immediately and workers could reapply for jobs, but gave no guarantees.

St. Mary and St. Agnes cemetery workers are the only unionized cemetery workers in the Syracuse Diocese. The relationship dates back to 1970 when the workers organized a Union with SEIU Local 200United. Workers make \$15.75 an hour. All six of the workers applied for jobs with the new corporate entity nearly a month ago, but none have been interviewed or told if they will have future employment.

“These Men, some who have given over 25 years of service to the Catholic Church are being thrown to the curb like garbage. They deserve a little more respect for their years of service. You expect this type of behavior from big corporations- but the Catholic church?” said Jerry Dennis, President of SEIU Local 200United.

Workers and community members have been leafleting parishes and pleading for the Bishop to meet with them and reconsider his decision. While the community support has been immense, the Bishop has refused to meet with workers to explain his reasoning.

“It is disingenuous for the Cemetery to say that this is to keep costs in line one minute and then the next say that all cemetery workers make similar wages. If that is the case how much could they possibly save, and why are they only eliminating the unionized workforce- this is Union Busting, plain and simple,” said Dawn Clarry, Political Director for SEIU Local 200United.

The rally will take place at 12:00pm today outside of the Catholic Diocese at 240 East Onondaga St, Syracuse.

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SEIU Local 200United represents 15,000 members all across New York State and is the largest Upstate private sector Union.

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