

International
media mines
Lancaster
County's
opposition to
Atlantic Sunrise
pipeline



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The Adorers of the Blood of Christ hold a prayer vigil to oppose the Atlantic Sunrise pipeline at their outdoor chapel in West Hempfield Township Sunday, July 16.

SUZETTE WENGER | Staff Photographer

As possible construction of the Atlantic Sunrise gas pipeline nears, continued opposition in Lancaster County — including by Catholic nuns — has brought international media attention in recent weeks.

Those reporting the controversy have included NBC News, BBC Radio, The Intercept, In These Times and The Bay Journal.

[“Battle Against Pipeline Company Finds Support Among Sisters with a Higher Calling,”](#) an online story by NBC News, includes interviews with members of the Adorers of the Blood of Christ near Columbia who believe the earth is sacred and that a pipeline carrying fossil fuels would harm that.

A chapel has been built in a corn field by pipeline opponents in the pipeline's right of way and plans are to hold a prayer vigil to block construction if the land is condemned in the courts, the story says.

The online story that lasts 5 minutes also shows opponents training in Lancaster County as they prepare for a "last resort" to stop the pipeline.

Opponents say they have signed up more than 1,000 people who have pledged to "put bodies in the way" in nonviolent protests of the pipeline.

They are shown practicing linking arms to block construction equipment.

BBC Radio weighs in with a 4-minute story, "[Nuns Fighting Fracking](#)." It includes an interview with Sister Janet McCann of the Adorers order who says the nuns' objection to the pipeline is based on strongly held religious tenets.

"Putting a fossil fuel pipeline on sacred ground goes against our beliefs," she says. "The chapel symbolizes physically that we believe this is holy ground."

In the interview, she acknowledges that the order uses energy derived in part from fossil fuels, but says she hopes the nuns can be part of the shift to more sustainable energy.

The Intercept, an investigative news organization started by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar, has a lengthy online photo essay and story called, "[Right of Way: Pennsylvania Residents in Path of Atlantic Sunrise Pipeline Brace for Fight Over Construction](#)."

The story includes interviews with nuns who have sued the federal government claiming that taking their land for a pipeline violates their First Amendment rights to freedom of religion.

Sister Bernice Klostermann says in the story that the nuns also oppose the pipeline because it promotes fracking for natural gas. “Fracking ruins the ground, ruins waterways, ruins the air,” she says. She also says she is ready to be arrested for her beliefs. In the story, pipeline builder Williams Partners accuse the sisters of a double standard.

“We find it ironic that the Adorers would challenge the value of natural gas infrastructure in the lawsuit, while at the same time promoting the availability and use of natural gas at their St. Anne’s Retirement Community,” says Williams spokesman Christopher Stockton.

The order founded the retirement home but have said they no longer operate it.

Inthesetimes, an independent, nonprofit magazine, features the reaction to the pipeline in Lancaster County in [“One Rural County’s Battle to Stop a Pipeline From Slicing Through Pennsylvania.”](#)

The story says opposition to the pipeline in Lancaster County made activists out of mild-mannered residents and invokes comparison to the 2016 volatile demonstrations against an oil pipeline on a Native American reservation in Standing Rock, North Dakota.

The Bay Journal, a nonprofit publication that centers on issues in the Chesapeake Bay, addresses the pipeline controversy in a story titled, [“Opponents of Pennsylvania gas pipeline vow to continue the fight.”](#)