

her so. That warm and friendly smile . . . that smile which charmed us all," Bishop Ahern added.

Cardinal O'Connor and Bishop Ahern both praised the Schweigers for their enormous strength.

The cardinal called the Schweigers "an enormous example of courage to all of us.

"It was their faith and courage that inspired so many, and that was born in their love for this youngster," he said.

Bishop Ahern told the Schweigers that "our hearts go out to you in sympathy for the cruel sorrow into which this has plunged you.

"Endlessly day after day, night after night, they cared for her, they loved her, they never counted the cost, they never felt it was anything but a privilege to serve this precious child of God," he said.

The bishop said he was sure "there is not a person on Staten Island or in the whole city of New

York who does not want to give you a piece of his or her heart."

Prior to the final prayers, Cardinal O'Connor asked the mourners to express their gratitude to the Cutugnos.

"Sometimes this would be considered a very tasteless thing to do. But there's so much emotion here. There has been so much pent up for so long," the cardinal said. "And I think there are so many of you that would want to say something and don't have the opportunity."

At that moment the audience broke into thunderous applause for the couple.

Following the service, the casket was driven to St. Mary's Cemetery in Lakewood, N.J.

Jennifer, who vanished July 9 while walking near her Wardwell Avenue home, was found in a shallow grave last Wednesday evening on the grounds of the Staten Island Developmental Center.

Andre Rand, a 43-year old drifter who was last seen walking

hand-in-hand with the girl, according to police, is charged in connection with her disappearance and is currently undergoing psychiatric evaluation in Kings County Hospital, Brooklyn.

Mrs. Cutugno said after the funeral that it's "very important that you have an ending to each story. Unfortunately, the other families (of other missing children) don't have an ending yet, so that makes it even harder.

"At one point I thought that we would stop for awhile, then when you see the faces of the other families, there's no way you can stop," she said. "You can't. You have to continue searching."

Hours after the hearse carrying Jennifer's small casket was given a police escort to the Outerbridge Crossing, volunteers gathered at the Holy Family Church to resume the search for the girl's clothing, as well as traces of any other children who may have suffered a fate similar to Jennifer's.

Volunteers plan to continue meeting nightly at 7 at the church.



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Detectives and friends escort the Schweigers into church.

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