

Demonstrators Take an Orderly Stand

Women Line Sidewalks to Protest Treatment of Salvador Refugees

By LAURIE BECKLUND, Times Staff Writer

Commuters entering downtown Los Angeles Wednesday morning found 6th and 7th streets lined with some of the most orderly demonstrators in memory: blocks of placard-bearing churchwomen stood still at curbside like human billboards to protest U.S. deportation of Salvadoran refugees.

The sidewalk stand-in was organized to launch a national petition drive urging President Reagan to grant Salvadorans the same temporary refugee status granted Nicaraguans, Vietnamese and Iranians while their countries were in civil war.

"One question women are asking in all different church groups is why there is so much official sympathy from the Reagan Administration for the Poles and none at all for the Salvadorans," said Cynthia Anderson of Lutheran Social Services, an organizer of the event.

"It's appropriate to grant political asylum to Poles, of course. But if it's appropriate to grant it to those from

a country where there have been relatively few deaths, it ought to be appropriate to grant temporary asylum to Salvadorans, who are from a country where there are 1,000 indiscriminate killings a month."

More than 250 churchwomen participated in the event, standing in the morning drizzle behind identical placards that read, "Women Against Deportation, Salvadoran Refugees."

For many, the demonstration was their first.

"It certainly feels strange," said one gray-haired first-timer, who asked to be identified only as a parochial school teacher. "It is a lot easier to just sit at home and watch the news on TV and feel concerned."

"I won't say I've never been involved before," said Lois Maski, a part-time employee of All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena, handing a petition to a lawyer. "I've done volunteer work at hospitals

and some other things. But this is my first demonstration.

"I guess I don't look at it from a political viewpoint, but rather from a humanitarian one."

The petition drive is being led here by a loose coalition of women of different faiths, including Anderson, the Rev. Alice Callaghan of All Saints Episcopal Church and several Roman Catholic nuns.

Anderson said the effort has been endorsed by prominent churchwomen nationwide, including Cynthia Wedell, president of the World Council of Churches; Thelma Adair, president of Churchwomen United, and Rosemary Reuther, an internationally known theologian.

The Reagan Administration has refused to grant temporary refuge—termed extended voluntary departure—to Salvadorans because it contends that Salvadorans are fleeing to the United States for economic, not political, reasons.