

71,000 March For Life, Hear Reagan Praise

Washington (NC) — An estimated 71,000 pro-lifers marched more than a mile through the streets of Washington Jan. 22 to protest abortion, legalized by the U.S. Supreme Court 12 years earlier.

The annual March for Life involved more than marching, however, as abortion opponents held news conferences, dinners, attended Mass, and heard President Reagan, in his first-ever live address to the marchers, say he was proud to "stand with you."

Twenty-nine protesters who knelt in prayer on the steps of the Supreme Court were arrested.

Many activities began the day before the march, however.

Archbishop Pio Laghi, apostolic nuncio to the United States, at a Jan. 21 Mass at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, told pro-lifers that "we greatly impoverish our humanity when we allow our consciences to ignore these truths about human life." He sought prayers "for the mothers whose consciences are most threatened when they allow their child's life to be taken."

The next morning about 1,500 people attended a Mass at the shrine before moving on to the Ellipse near the White House for the annual march. At that Mass, Archbishop James A. Hickey of Washington said pro-lifers "are called to stand up for

the vulnerable, the poor, the powerless. The unborn have an overpowering claim on our consciences, since they cannot speak for themselves."

At another pre-march activity, the National Right to Life Committee held a screening for the news media of the ultrasound abortion film, "Silent Scream," showing destruction of a 12-week-old fetus.

"Unplanned pregnancy is understandably a wrenching social problem," but it cannot be solved through a "holocaust" in which unborn children are "fed to these engines of death," said Dr. Bernard Nathanson, who produced the film of the abortion performed by another doctor. Nathanson, who once performed abortions, is now an active pro-lifer.

Dr. John C. Willke, NRLC president, told reporters that progress is being made in the anti-abortion fight through help from the growing ranks of evangelical Christians and young people in the movement.

Willke and about 24 other pro-life leaders met with Reagan later in the day.

Also at the morning press conference, Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, acknowledged that pro-lifers lack sufficient strength in the recently convened Congress to pass an anti-abortion constitutional amendment. However, he urged efforts to pass a permanent ban on

government funding of abortions, to replace use of yearly bans.

During the press conference, in speeches before the march, and in other activities, pro-life leaders also repeatedly denounced use of bombings and other violent attacks on abortion clinics.

Speaking from the Oval Office to the marchers, Reagan thanked pro-lifers for their "overwhelming support" for the unborn and said he felt "a great sense of solidarity with all of you." He said the reaction of all to the anniversary of the Supreme Court abortion ruling "must be to rededicate ourselves to ending the terrible national tragedy of abortion."

He encouraged "a complete rejection of violence as a means of settling this issue" and said pro-lifers "cannot condone the threatening or taking of human life to protest the taking of human life by abortion."

When told by March for Life President Nellie Gray that pro-lifers back the so-called Paramount Human Life Amendment, one proposed anti-abortion constitutional amendment, with no compromises, Reagan responded, "Good for you. And I support you."

His comment caused some confusion among White House staff and press who heard his remarks in the White House briefing room, for Reagan had earlier seemed to be less direct in supporting any particular anti-abortion measure.

According to the March for Life, the "paramount" amendment would not allow exceptions in order to save the life of the mother and would instead demand equal care for both mother and unborn child.

Later, the White House press office, clarifying Reagan's views on the "paramount" amendment, stated that "there is no change in the president's position on abortion. He believes that abortion should be prohibited except when the life of the mother is endangered."

During other brief speeches at the Ellipse kicking off the march:

— Miss Gray said that "we will not do violence. We shall stand up simply as Americans and we will be more in number than the abortionists."

— The Rev. Jerry Falwell, a Baptist minister and founder of the Moral Majority, said the fight against abortion has brought together Catholics, Protestants, Jews and fundamentalists.

— Rep. Michael DeWine, R-Ohio, said that "as a pro-lifer I condemn the bombings" of abortion clinics, "but I should also say that to condemn the destruction of buildings but to fail to condemn the destruction of life within the buildings is illogical and wrong."

— Rep. Guy Vander Jagt, R-Mich., told the crowd, "I'm excited. I feel good about America" because attitudes about abortion, he said, are changing. He predicted that abortion will be



Julie Iverson of North Jay, Maine, marches during the 12th annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Iverson brought her five-month-old baby, wrapped in a blanket, to the demonstration.

abolished "in the next five years."

— Rep. Christopher Smith, R-N.J., called abortion "violence against kids. It is the ultimate form of child abuse."

— Rep. Barbara F. Vucanovich, R-Nev., said "children are not the only victims" of abortion. Women also suffer when they "sacrifice a child for reasons that later seem inconsequential by comparison."

— Rep. Harold L. Volkmer, D-Mo., called the abortion fight a nonpartisan issue and pledged, "We will have a human life amendment."

The marchers, estimated by both District of Columbia and U.S. Park Police at 71,500, then left for the Capitol, some to lobby and

others to demonstrate at the nearby Supreme Court building. Those arrested at the court were charged with violating federal laws against marching or displaying banners on Supreme Court property.

After meeting with Reagan late in the day, pro-life leaders expressed confidence in the president's strong support for the right-to-life movement. About 25 attended the White House meeting, where they also spoke to Dr. C. Everett Koop, U.S. surgeon general, Margaret M. Heckler, secretary of health and human services, and various White House aides.

Those attending included Miss Gray, Willke of the NRLC, Joseph Scheidler, director of the Pro-Life Ac-

tion League, Dr. Mildred Jefferson, former NRLC president and long-time anti-abortion activist, and others.

"President Reagan was most supportive," Willke said later, meeting with reporters. "The president is a solid pro-lifer right down to his gut. I thanked him for his courage and for hanging tough."

Willke said that in overall strategy, pro-lifers' "first effort would be to reverse Roe vs. Wade," the Supreme Court abortion ruling. However, that reversal would only return the nation to the days when various states had abortion bans and others did not, Willke added. "We all want to go further than that."

Sex Ed Program Ready for Trial

The new Human Sexuality and Family Life Education curriculum has been approved and will be piloted in Rochester junior high schools during the second semester of this school year, February-June.

The curriculum, which has been developed cooperatively by the Rochester City School District and the Monroe County Teen Pregnancy Coalition, is the first step in a full revision of the district's program of sex education and family life, it was announced at a press conference last Friday.

Father Charles Mulligan, director of Social Ministries for the Rochester Roman Catholic diocese, served as co-chairman of the teen pregnancy coalition with James McCuller of Action for a Better Community.

The coalition is satisfied with the curriculum in its pilot form, Father Mulligan said. He said that during the pilot period the program will "still be open" to re-evaluation and revision.

"Parents will continue to have opportunities to review the curriculum" both at their children's schools and at public libraries "and to attend classroom sessions at which the curriculum is taught," he said.

The seventh grade curriculum will be introduced in city junior high schools next month by health teachers who have already been

trained in its use. The teachers will evaluate the effectiveness of the activities in each unit and any necessary modifications and adjustments will be made during the summer with the final version of the curriculum to be implemented in 1985-86.

A handbook outlining its contents and use of the curriculum will be developed and distributed to parents of seventh graders in the Fall of 1985.

The district's sex education program also will be revised at the elementary and high school level. Work will begin on the senior high component this Spring and the elementary school curriculum will be developed during the school year 1986-87. The district and coalition will continue their collaboration. Lawrence Perkins, the district's director of Health and Physical Education, is supervising development of the curriculum and serves as liaison between the district and the coalition.

The program was conceived as a response to data indicating that increasing numbers of young people became sexually active in early adolescence. The district worked on the plan for three years and early in the planning invited the participation of the teen pregnancy coalition, a group representing some 30 health agencies, community organizations, social agencies and religious ministries.

M. Teresa Takes Communion in State Church

Peking (NC) — Mother Teresa of Calcutta received Communion Jan. 21 in one of China's government-approved Patriotic Catholic churches, which do not recognize the Vatican's authority.

The 6:30 a.m. Mass at the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception had "a few things different" from the approved Catholic liturgy, Mother Teresa said.

"I was surprised to see so many people so early and praying so beautifully," said Mother Teresa.

Mother Teresa was visiting Peking Jan. 20-22 to offer to set up homes for the destitute, like those run by her Missionaries of Charity in 67 other countries.

Mother Teresa said although China has a state welfare system, her homes

could provide "tender love and care."

The 74-year-old nun, known for her work among India's poorest people, met with Bishop Michael Fu Tieshan of the National Association of Patriotic Catholics, who told her: "You are a good daughter of God and have done a lot of work in helping the poor and disabled. It's good work."