

Violence at clinics draws denunciations from pro-life forces

By NC News Service

In sites from New York City to Portland, Ore., in acts rejected by pro-life leaders, 11 abortion clinics and a non-abortion family planning agency were bombed, targeted in attempted bombings, or set afire in late 1985. Repudiating such approaches, a Toledo, Ohio, pro-life group, *Foundation for Life*, offered a \$500 reward for arrest and conviction of those responsible for an apparent arson attack on an abortion facility there.

"We want the abortion clinics to be closed and closed forever — but not that way," said Chris Reynolds-Holliday, *Foundation for Life* president.

Similar sentiments were expressed Dec. 13 in the New York City area when five organizations — the New Jersey Right to Life Committee, New York Right to Life, the Connecticut Pro-Life Council, Families for Life, and the Long Island Coalition for Life — offered a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for the Dec. 10 bombing of a Manhattan clinic.

But Ann Mitchell, executive director of Cincinnati Planned Parenthood, operator of a clinic damaged in an alleged arson attack in late December, said that after the incident rosary-carrying abortion opponents staged a demonstration "praising God for the destruction of the clinic."

Recent incidents of violence have included:

- Dec. 31: arson attack on the Toledo Medical Services Inc., clinic.
- Dec. 30: apparent arson attacks on two clinics in Cincinnati: the Margaret Sanger Center, which is a Planned Parenthood facility, and the Women's Health Care Center.

- Dec. 19: bombing of the Coram Women's Health Center in Suffolk County, N.Y.

- Dec. 10: bombing of the Manhattan Women's Medical Center in New York.

- Early December: mail bombs intercepted before exploding in Portland, Ore., aimed at two abortion clinics, an abortion physician, and a Planned Parenthood family

planning office that does not provide abortions.

- Oct. 27 and Oct. 30: arson attacks in Baton Rouge, La., on the River City Women's Clinic and the Delta Women's Clinic West.

- Oct. 25: arson attack on a clinic in Raleigh, N.C.

While Mitchell, the Planned Parenthood

official in Cincinnati, said that unidentified abortion opponents, including a man in a black suit and priest's collar, were openly demonstrating and "thanking God" after the attack on the Sanger clinic in Cincinnati, others disowned the violence.

Daniel J. Donohay, public relations director of the National Right to Life Committee, said that "I sure hope they do" catch whoever was responsible for mail bombs intended for the abortion clinics in Oregon.

He cited a 1985 NRLC statement that "if we were to adopt the evil tactics of those who would promote abortion by using violence ourselves, we would destroy the very ethic that is the foundation of our pro-life movement."

In Toledo, Reynolds-Holliday added that offering a reward "will impress other people that we're willing to put our hard-earned money up" to arrest whoever was responsible.

Dan Roche, director of the Cincinnati Archdiocesan Family Life Office, reiterated the U.S. bishops' opposition to use of violence in anti-abortion activities.

In their "Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities" reauthorized by the U.S. bishops last November the bishops commented, "Since our goal is to eliminate violence against the unborn, we oppose any use of violence to achieve this objective."

The Family Life Office supports and promotes many pro-life efforts through seminars, funding and lobbying, but "it cannot condone violence in the cause of protecting the unborn from abortion," Roche said.

Planned Parenthood's Mitchell blamed the acts against her clinic in Cincinnati and others across the nation on the "emotional rhetoric and fanaticism" of groups that picket clinics.

But Barbara Willke, co-chairperson of Greater Cincinnati Right to Life, and wife of Dr. John Willke, NRLC president, said most people arrested for bombing abortion clinics are husbands, fathers and others whose girlfriends, wives and daughters had abortions over their objections.

Contributing to this story were Marianne Cianciolo in Cincinnati and Tom Kelly in Toledo.

Reagan says abortion weighs on U.S. conscience

Washington (NC) — President Reagan Jan. 16 criticized the Supreme Court's legalization of abortion, saying that "each year the terrible toll of more than a million innocent human lives has weighed more heavily on the conscience of America."

Reagan also proclaimed Jan. 19, the Sunday before the anniversary of the high court ruling, to be National Sanctity of Human Life Day.

When the Supreme Court ruled Jan. 22, 1973, that abortion should be legal nationwide, "there were those who predicted confidently that in time Americans would come to accept the court's decision and the 'new ethic' that it reflects," the president said in a statement. "History has proved them wrong."

Reagan voiced similar views in a written message published in the Jan. 9 National Right to Life Committee

newspaper. "This terrible toll has weighed heavily on the conscience of America," that message stated.

"You can take great credit for the growing awareness about the violence that is abortion," Reagan wrote. "I cannot commend too highly the dedication of citizens like you who have worked, struggled, and prayed for years to save the unborn and give crucial help to their mothers. You have helped to make your fellow citizens understand that abortions kill babies and that positive alternatives are available."

A November 1985 Louis Harris and Associates poll found a slight decrease in support for legal abortion over January 1985 levels. The November poll showed that 50 percent of respondents favored the Supreme Court decision and 47 opposed it. The earlier poll had found that 56 percent favored the decision and 42 percent opposed it.

March demonstrates 'dogged persistence' of abortion foes

By Stephen Overman

Washington (NC) — The 13th annual March for Life, to be held Jan. 22 in Washington, shows the "dogged persistence" of abortion opponents, according to Nellie J. Gray, president of March for Life.

"The most important thing is the persistence," Gray said in a Jan. 8 interview. Gray has organized each of the national marches, begun after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down most state abortion laws in 1973.

Shortly after the court's decision, Gray said she heard abortion supporters saying, "We expect some grumbling, but they'll get used to it." But, she emphasized, "We're not going to get used to it."

District of Columbia police estimated that 71,500 people attended last year's march.

This year's national observance will include Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago, chairman of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities, as the main celebrant and homilist at a vigil Mass.

The Mass will be celebrated at the National

Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington Jan. 21. The prayer vigil is sponsored by the shrine, the NCCB and the Archdiocese of Washington.

The march itself will begin at the Ellipse, between the White House and the Washington Monument, and move along Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol and the Supreme Court.

Last year President Reagan, in his first-ever live address to the marchers, told them he was proud to "stand with you." In 1984 he waved to the marchers from the south balcony of the White House.

Gray said an invitation has gone out again this year to Reagan but that she had not received a response.

Following the march the fourth annual Rose Dinner will be held with Rep. Jack Kemp, R-N.Y., and Auxiliary Bishop Thomas W. Lyons of Washington as the main speakers.

Local rallies around the country will tie in with the national march. The theme of this year's march is "Unity on the Life Principles — No Exceptions, No Compromises."

"We're going to save all the babies —

that's what the message is," Gray said of the theme.

Gray said she did not want to try to predict the number of people who would attend the 1986 march because of the fickleness of the January weather. In previous years marchers — many of whom come by bus from around the country for the event — have braved snow, ice and cold rains.

Cincinnati passes law on disposal of fetuses

By Marianne Cianciolo

Cincinnati (NC) — Pro-life groups have praised a new fetal remains disposal ordinance in Cincinnati. But abortion rights groups, contending the new law is unconstitutional, have promised to challenge it in court.

The hotly debated ordinance, passed by the Cincinnati City Council Jan. 8, requires that aborted fetuses must be deposited in a vault or tomb, cremated, interred or disposed of in a manner approved by the city health commissioner.

The new law also demands that each hospital, clinic or laboratory handling fetal remains obtain a permit from the city health commissioner and report each year the number of fetuses disposed of and the methods used.

Aborted fetuses up to 20 weeks gestation are covered by the new Cincinnati law. Ohio state law deals with fetuses over 14 weeks.

The 5-4 City Council vote brought a standing ovation from dozens of pro-lifers at the meeting.

But Ann Mitchell, executive director of the Planned Parenthood Association of Cincinnati, announced the next day that her organization will take legal action.

Abortion supporters had claimed the law was unnecessary because the remains already were being disposed of in a sanitary manner by incineration or cremation.

Pro-lifers, however, believe the law will ensure greater respect for unborn children.

"This is the first step that leads to the ultimate protection of all unborn babies," said Barbara Willke, co-chairperson of

Greater Cincinnati Right to Life. Her husband, Dr. John Willke, is president of the National Right to Life Committee.

"This law recognizes that unborn babies are human beings," Mrs. Willke added.

Cincinnati Health Commissioner Stanley E. Broadnax, in a memo to the council, wrote that the ordinance would "add nothing to safety or public health" and that the nine hospitals, six clinics and three laboratories affected by it were already "disposing of fetal tissue appropriately."

The Supreme Court in 1983 ruled unconstitutional an earlier Akron law demanding that aborted unborn babies be "disposed of in a humane and sanitary manner." But James Bopp, NRLC attorney, said the Cincinnati law is constitutional and spells out specific methods of disposal, unlike the Akron law.

Kathy Helmbock, press representative for the Cincinnati branch of the National Organization for Women, said the law would probably increase the cost of an abortion but said she was hopeful it would not change anything else. "Fetuses are now incinerated, cremated," she said. "If all this is going to do is enshrine the status quo, OK."

Mrs. Willke said that "by saying you must dispose of the baby in a proper way, you're admitting it's a human. It's an admission they are killing human life and they don't like to admit that."

Debate on the proposal was heightened by recent fires, apparently arson attacks, at two Cincinnati abortion clinics.

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