

# Activists seek low-cost housing, end to homelessness

By Laurie Hansen  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Tens of thousands of marchers — ranging from parish council members to Hollywood stars to the homeless — descended on Washington, D.C., Oct. 7 to demand affordable housing and an end to homelessness.

Waving colorful handmade placards and banners that read, "2,000 years and still no room in the inn," and "May we borrow Kennebunkport for the winter?" protesters

called on the federal government to put housing higher on its priority list. President Bush's summer home is located in Kennebunkport, Maine.

Hailing from as far away as Oakland, Calif., Pontiac, Mich., and Miami, Fla., the marchers hiked under blue skies from various points in the Washington area to the Capitol. A large crowd paraded from the Pentagon across the Potomac River to emphasize what protesters saw as the link between too much military spending and

too little affordable housing.

Touted as one of the biggest marches the nation's capital has seen in recent years, the rally was sponsored by Housing Now!, a coalition of more than 200 organizations, including the AFL-CIO, the National Urban League, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Catholic Charities USA and the National Organization for Women.

The U.S. Park Service estimated the crowd at 40,000, but organizers said some 250,000 were present.

Auxiliary Bishop Joseph M. Sullivan of Brooklyn, chairman of the U.S. Catholic Conference Committee on Domestic Social Policy, said during the prayer service at St. Aloysius that "we are here not to provide for (the homeless) but to include them in; not to build a society for the poor, but to assist them to join in a society for all God's people.

"We will march out of this church to the Capitol, the very symbol of power and authority," he said, "and try to impress upon (government officials) that we are shamed, disgraced that in going from our homes to our workplaces we see people who live on the streets.

"We come here asking God's mercy on our sinfulness," he said.

At the Capitol, protesters listened to rock musicians, including Los Lobos, Tracy Chapman and Stevie Wonder. They heard television actresses Valerie Harper and Susan Dey introduce dozens of Hollywood celebrities. The list of stars was so long that marchers began to chant, "TV later, housing now."

Ohio Gov. Richard Celeste said the "real scandal is not the \$4 billion" lost as a result of the recently exposed U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development scandal, "it is the \$24 billion that was denied to the poor and the powerless who depended on HUD for housing." Celeste's comments referred to federal housing cutbacks.

The Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, who ran for president in 1988, added, "They cut the HUD budget 75 percent, and then they stole the other 25 percent.

"There should be houses for the poor. There should be jailhouses for those who stole the money," the Rev. Jackson said.

Ann Marie and John Hansen of Pittsburgh brought their five children, ages 1 to 9, to the march. "We came because we care... and for the sake of our children," she said. "We want them to know that you must take an active role in peace and justice issues in order to be Catholic."

## High court in Florida overturns abortion consent law for minors

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (CNS) — The Florida Supreme Court October 5 struck down the state's parental consent law for minors seeking abortions.

Pro-lifers are "very disappointed" over the ruling, Thomas Horkan Jr., executive director of the Florida Catholic Conference, told Catholic News Service Oct. 5.

Despite the court ruling, the Florida Legislature was still expected to meet in special session Oct. 10-13 to discuss a package of abortion restriction bills.

The Florida court ruled that the state constitution's privacy amendment protects the right to an abortion for women of any age, because the privacy amendment covers "every natural person," minors and adults alike.

Florida's privacy rights are considered stronger than federal privacy rights, Horkan said.

The law, which was passed in 1988, was tested by a 15-year-old girl who sought an abortion and did not want to tell her parents. Seeking a "judicial bypass" to get the abortion, she was denied by a judge.

An appellate court found the judicial bypass provision in the law unconstitutional, but did not grant consent for an abortion. On May 16, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy issued a temporary order blocking an abortion until the full court could review the matter.

## Curran was deprived of tenure, report says

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Catholic University of America professor Father Charles E. Curran was effectively "deprived of his tenure" as a moral theologian at the university "without due process and without adequate cause," according to an American Association of University Professors report on the case.

The report, published in the September-October issue of *Academe*, the association's magazine, concluded that the university failed to "protect the university's autonomy and the academic freedom of the faculty."

Father Curran's license to teach Catholic theology was revoked by the university in 1987 after a 1986 letter by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, told Father Curran he was "not suitable nor eligible" to teach Catholic theology at the pontifically chartered university.

A response from the Catholic University administration's counsel, published as an addendum to the report, said, "The university's actions in this case have been vindicated completely," citing a District of Columbia Superior Court ruling in February that Father Curran's guarantees of academic freedom were not violated by the university.

The report could lead to formal censure next June by the professors' association against Catholic University's administration.

Father Curran is currently a visiting professor at the University of Southern California's School of Religion in Los Angeles.

On May 18, the U.S. Supreme Court — with no dissents recorded — overturned the temporary order, rendering the Florida law unenforceable.

The parental consent case was the first abortion law tested by a state supreme court following the July 3 U.S. Supreme Court decision, which granted states greater authority to regulate abortion.

In its decision, the Florida high court said, "The challenged statute fails because it intrudes upon the privacy of the pregnant minor from conception to birth."

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