

# Court comes close to overturning Roe

By Patricia Zapor  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court's decision upholding Pennsylvania's Abortion Control Act actually was within one vote of becoming a ruling to overturn *Roe vs. Wade*.

The nation's highest court in its June 29 ruling divided into three overlapping camps, upholding most of Pennsylvania's abortion law and narrowly reaffirming part of the 1973 *Roe* ruling.

The five-part opinion upheld states' rights to impose limits on abortion, but drew the line at making married women account to their husbands before undergoing abortions.

The major elements of the ruling include:

- Seven justices upheld provisions of the Pennsylvania Abortion Control Act requiring informed consent, a waiting period, parental notification and other record-keeping.

- Five members reaffirmed the "essential holding" of *Roe vs. Wade*: that women have a right to have abortions before the point at which the fetus could survive outside the womb, without undue interference from the state.

- Two of those five rejected all contested provisions of the Pennsylvania law. The remaining three justices objected only to the spouse-notification

requirement, calling it an "undue burden."

- Four justices would have used the case, *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania vs. Casey*, to throw out *Roe vs. Wade*, the 1973 decision making abortion legal throughout the country.

- The same four joined with three others in upholding the Pennsylvania statute, adding that they also would support the state's right to require married women planning abortions to notify their husbands.

But even though the majority voiced a reaffirmation of *Roe*, other parts of their decision reversed previous *Roe*-based rulings. For instance, the latest

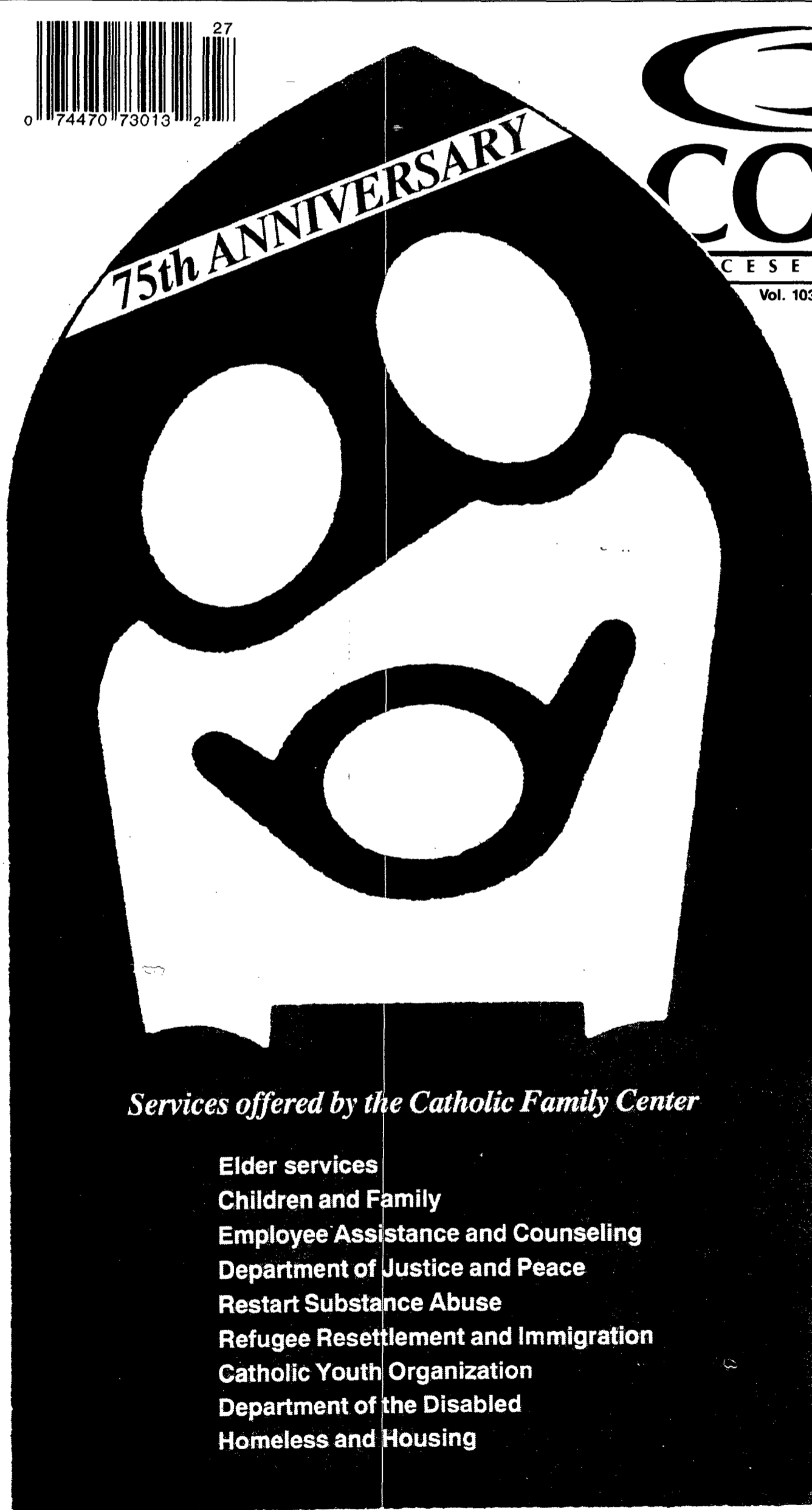
decision overrules findings from 1983's *Akron vs. Akron Center for Reproductive Health Services* and 1986's *Thornburgh vs. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists*. Both rulings rejected laws that restricted the circumstances under which abortions could be obtained.

The court upheld these provisions of Pennsylvania's Abortion Control Law:

- That women seeking abortions must receive information about risks, alternatives and fetal development and must wait at least 24 hours after receiving that information.

- That medical offices must file detailed, confidential reports about each

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### Agency adapts to meet society's changing needs

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — In its 1917 year-end report, the Rochester Catholic Charities Aid Association disclosed having spent \$30,000 to help some 500 families.

In 1992, the Catholic Family Center will use a budget of \$8 million to serve an estimated 39,000 clients.

If those who worked for the aid association in 1917 looked at today's Catholic Family Center, they might at first see few connections between the two agencies.

The seven-person staff of 1917, focused on running orphanages, providing milk and baby clothing, and operating settlement houses for European immigrants.

The Catholic Family Center of 1992 employs 285 people working in family services; counseling; treatment programs for substance abusers; support programs for the elderly and disabled; adoption and foster-care services; an employee-assistance program; and residential programs.

Yet the modern agency is the direct descendent of the tiny aid association founded in

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#### Services offered by the Catholic Family Center

- Elder services
- Children and Family
- Employee Assistance and Counseling
- Department of Justice and Peace
- Restart Substance Abuse
- Refugee Resettlement and Immigration
- Catholic Youth Organization
- Department of the Disabled
- Homeless and Housing

# Catholic Family Center