

March targets Clinton on anniversary of Roe

By Patricia Zapor
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Just two days into his presidency, President Clinton became the focal point of objections to abortion as thousands descended on Washington for the 20th March for Life on the anniversary of Roe vs. Wade.

Among those attending the march were several hundred people from the Rochester diocese, traveling on their own or in buses from Rochester, Waterloo, Horseheads and Apalachin.

As expected, Clinton marked the anniversary of Roe by signing executive orders reversing several regulations on abortion that his predecessors George Bush and Ronald Reagan had implemented.

In five executive orders Jan. 22, Clinton reversed the ban on abortion counseling in federal family planning clinics; overturned the moratorium on federally funded research involving the use of fetal tissue; ordered a study of the current ban on import of the French abortion pill, RU-486; revoked the prohibition on abortions in military hospitals overseas; and voided the "Mexico City policy," which had forbid U.S. foreign aid funds to agencies promoting abortions.

"None of the federal policies reversed today restricted a single abortion," said Cardinal Roger M. Mahony of Los Angeles, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Acti-

vities.

Clinton also got a strong rebuke from the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, which said his administration had started down "the pathway of death and violence against innocent human beings."

"This is not progress for the United States nor for humanity which, once again, must suffer a humiliating defeat," the newspaper said in a Jan. 23 commentary.

Cardinals and bishops from around the country joined in the march. Seeing so many church leaders — both Catholic and non-Catholic — at the rally was inspiring to many of the marchers, reported Richard Roberts II, a first-time participant in the march.

"I'm glad to see the church is finally taking the offensive on (abortion)," said Roberts, business manager at Auburn's St. Francis of Assisi Church, 185 Clark St. "It was good to see a conglomeration of different faiths coming together to fight a common enemy."

On the other hand, Richard Ivancie, who has attended many marches since his first one in 1975, noted a different tone in this year's speeches as compared to those in recent years.

"The pro-life community got a little apathetic because of the Reagan/Bush administrations," noted Ivancie, a parishioner at Apalachin's St. Margaret Mary Church, 110 Pennsylvania Ave.

This time, however, Ivancie said, "The spirit was like girding the loins.



Out of control

AP/Wide World Photos

A white bystander in Denver is beaten by a group of black men Jan. 18, after marchers honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Ku Klux Klan activists held simultaneous rallies.

We knew that we'd lost the battle, but not the war. A lot of the speeches were for firing up the troops.

"I don't think anybody's willing to give up," Ivancie added. "People just realize, 'Boy, we've got a job ahead of us.'"

At the March for Life rally, organizer Nellie Gray assailed the press for predicting the death of the pro-life movement after the 1992 elections.

"We didn't die on Election Day," Gray said. "We were reinvigorated."

Gray estimated the crowd at the rally at 250,000. The U.S. Park Service Police estimated the crowd at 75,000. Last year the Park Service estimated the crowd at 70,000.

Contains reporting by Senior staff writer Lee Strong.

Marshall's legacy one of racial justice, liberal abortion laws

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The late Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall will be remembered for his strides in fighting racial injustice but also for where he stood in decisions that liberalized abortion laws.

The first black to serve on the nation's highest court, Marshall died Jan. 24 at the age of 84.

Eighteen months earlier he had announced he was retiring because, as he said, "I'm getting old and coming apart." Clarence Thomas was later confirmed to succeed him on the court.

"His legacy is almost imperishable," Jesuit Father Robert F. Drinan said when Marshall retired in 1991. "He's left a fantastic legacy." Father Drinan, a Georgetown University law professor and former member of Congress, knew Marshall for decades.

Marshall's place in the civil rights movement was assured early in his career when he persuaded the Supreme Court in 1954 to outlaw the "separate but equal" policy in education that had kept races segregated. The case, *Brown vs. Board of Education*, stands as a landmark ruling.

"But for him, 'separate but equal' might still be around," Father Drinan said Jan. 25.

The priest recalled watching Marshall come out of the Supreme Court building a year or two before he argued the *Brown* case, carrying an opinion issued that day which Marshall thought lay the legal groundwork to overturn the "separate but equal" policy. In that opinion "he thought he had the arguments to vindicate" his own case, Father Drinan said.

One the abortion issue, Marshall was criticized by Douglas Johnson, legislative director for the National Right to Life Committee, for having "a moral blind spot" that "contributed to the

removal of all legal protection from another group of human beings, unborn children."

Johnson, who made the remarks at the time of Marshall's retirement, also credited the justice's "historic role in winning civil rights long wrongfully denied to African-Americans."

Last summer, Marshall was honored as the first recipient of an award from the American Bar Association that was established in his name. Father Drinan, a longtime board member of the

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, worked to establish the ABA award to honor the spirit and work of Marshall.

The great-grandson of a slave brought from Africa, Marshall began arguing civil rights cases before the Supreme Court in 1939 as chief counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

He fought to desegregate schools; to end voting laws that kept blacks from participating in elections; to outlaw

homeowner covenants that kept racial minorities from buying property reserved for whites; and consistently opposed the death penalty as being applied in a discriminatory manner.

After stints as a federal appellate judge and as U.S. solicitor general, Marshall was nominated to the Supreme Court in 1967.

Marshall voted with the majority in *Roe vs. Wade*, the 1973 ruling legalizing abortion, and he consistently supported unrestricted access to abortion.

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