

Moratorium debated after clinic shootings

BOSTON (CNS) — As accused abortion clinic shooter John C. Salvi III pleaded innocent to murder and attempted murder in Boston Jan. 9, a debate was emerging among Catholic and pro-life leaders about whether there should be a national moratorium on peaceful protests outside abortion clinics.

Although Boston Cardinal Bernard F. Law had asked for such a moratorium in his archdiocese immediately after the Dec. 30 shootings at two Boston-area clinics, New York's Cardinal John J. O'Connor said at a Jan. 8 Mass that he would take that action only if a moratorium were called on abortions.

Cardinal O'Connor said he would follow Cardinal Law's example of initiating scheduled periods of prayer in churches for the cause of human life. But in the New York archdiocese, he said, they would be "in addition to any prayer vigils that responsible individuals or groups believe that they should conduct legally and nonviolently."

A priest who heads a diocesan pro-life group in Brooklyn said his group would continue to conduct peaceful vigils outside abortion clinics in Brooklyn and Queens, the two New York boroughs that the diocese encompasses. Cardinal Law's call for a moratorium in his area was "not meant to be a national policy," said Monsignor Philip H. Reilly, director of Helpers of God's Precious Infants.

In Camden, N.J., Bishop James T. McHugh issued guidelines for peaceful demonstrations at abortion clinics, saying that they "must always reflect Gospel values and be law-abiding."

Bishop Leo E. O'Neil of Manchester, N.H., the diocese in which Salvi lived at the time of the shootings, also called for a temporary halt to peaceful protests outside abortion clinics. "My own personal opinion is we should use every means in the political arena to make our position known and teach the public about the principles of life," he said.

Catholics for a Free Choice in a Jan. 4 statement asked Catholic leaders to "distance themselves and cease to participate in protests at clinics and other similar events on a permanent basis."

Urging cancellation of the 1995 March for Life, scheduled for Jan. 23 in Washington, the group added, "We hope that if it proceeds, no member of the Catholic clergy participate in this event at this time and Catholic schools from grammar through university not support or send students to this march."

Catholics for a Free Choice was denounced in 1993 by the U.S. bishops' 50-member Administrative Committee, which said the group "merits no recognition or support as a Catholic organization" and is funded mostly by non-Catholic sources.

Meanwhile, a clearer picture was emerging of Salvi, the 22-year-old hair-dressing student arrested Dec. 31 for the shootings in Brookline, Mass., which



killed two and wounded five others, and for firing shots at a clinic in Norfolk, Va., where no one was hurt.

In a lengthy, often-rambling statement released Jan. 5, Salvi said that if he is found guilty of the charges he faces, he wants to be executed. If he is acquitted, he said, he wants to become a Catholic priest.

The statement also discussed "the persecution which the Catholic people face" and suggested that the Catholic Church begin printing money to help low-income Catholic people make ends meet.

Monsignor Francis J. Maniscalco, media relations director for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, said Salvi's statement "shows how confused and deeply disturbed he is."

In Boston, police were stationed around the cardinal's residence, which is next to the chancery.

Father Peter V. Conley, editor of *The Pilot*, archdiocesan newspaper, said neither he nor Cardinal Law had heard from Salvi, who had expressed an interest in contacting the cardinal and other Catholic leaders. Father Conley said *The Pilot* would not provide a forum for Salvi's views.

Writing in the Jan. 6 issue of *The Pilot*, Cardinal Law said his heart was "filled with heavy sorrow" over the shootings. "May the God of love and mercy bring those who were killed to that place where every tear will be wiped away, and may the compassionate Lord console all those who knew and loved those two young women," he wrote.

An editorial in the same edition concluded: "But while we psychoanalyze John Salvi, express outrage at a violence that can never be justified, and carry on a national debate about a moral issue as vital as slavery, we must never forget the names of Shannon Lowney and Leanne Nichols. May a gentle Lord give them rest."

Ms. Lowney, 25, and Ms. Nichols, 38, were killed at the Planned Parenthood and Preterm Health Services abortion clinics, respectively.

A full-page ad in *The New York Times* Jan. 5 that said Catholic leaders "incite terrorism and death" by their words against abortion brought an outraged response from the head of the U.S. bishops' pro-life office, as well as from the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights and the Knights of Columbus.

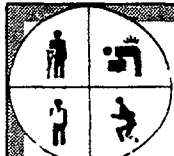
Gail Quinn, executive director of the bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, said the ad placed by Planned Parenthood of New York City to solicit contributions for additional security at abortion clinics was a "crass attempt to use Friday's murders to scapegoat the Catholic Church in order to fund raise and to silence public discussion of what abortion is — the destruction of innocent human life."



AP/Wide World Photos

A struggle for food

Residents of Las Margaritas, Mexico, located in the southeastern state of Chiapas, struggle to reach food being distributed by the army. The Mexican army has maintained a visible presence in the state in the year since the Zapatista rebel uprising.



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