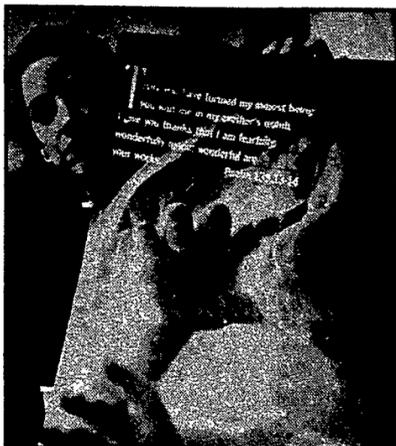


Marriage Special Edition

Court review will draw welcomed focus



Nancy Wijched/CNS

Helen Alvare of the U.S. bishop's Office for Pro-Life Activities displays a 1998 poster mailed to U.S. senators.

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Supreme Court's Jan. 14th decision to review Nebraska's law prohibiting partial-birth abortions is important no matter how the ruling goes, according to spokeswomen for the U.S. bishops.

Gail Quinn, director of the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, said Jan. 17 that the court could either uphold or reject Nebraska's law in a way that affects abortion law nationwide, or it could address only procedural issues, "rather than the substance of partial-birth abortion — which is 'ex utero' killing or infanticide."

Also unknown is whether the court will incorporate pending appeals of lower court rulings affecting states other than Nebraska.

Whatever the result, over the next few months, nationwide attention will focus on a type of abortion that 27 states have tried to prohibit, Quinn said.

"So even if we lose, it's an opportunity take this before the public," she said.

Helen Alvare, director of policy and planning for the secretariat, said the upcoming public debate sure to accompany the court's review will be a chance "to focus on partial-birth abortion and how the abortion industry twists facts."

Alvare said she had not expected the Supreme Court to take on partial-birth abortion this term. The court is expected to hear oral arguments in April and issue a ruling before it adjourns in late June or early July.

Quinn noted that if the court decides to

incorporate appeals from other states, that might force a delay into the 2000-2001 term. The court's last scheduled day for oral arguments this term is April 26.

The 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals opinion, which also overruled laws in Arkansas and Iowa, was followed a month later by a contrary ruling in the 7th Circuit. The latter upheld the partial-birth abortion bans of Wisconsin and Illinois.

That means the parties in those states had a deadline about a month later than Nebraska did to ask the Supreme Court to grant review. If the high court chooses to pair cases from both circuits, it might push them into the next term.

But the current timing will mean increased public discussion of the issue will

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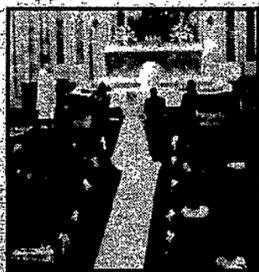


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Young couples marrying outside the church

In the summer of 1998, Stacy Henneberg went on a retreat in Canandaigua sponsored by Odyssey, the Diocese of Rochester's young-adult network. There she met David Rappold, who she found shared her deep faith in Catholicism. On April 28 of this year, Henneberg and Rappold will marry at St. John of Rochester Church in Fairport. As Henneberg tells it, she wouldn't want it any other way.

"I do go to church every week, and I was raised a Catholic in my family," Henneberg said. "I wanted someone who shared the same values and the same beliefs."

Henneberg noted that she once was engaged to a non-Catholic, but it didn't work out.

"It was very difficult because it felt like I was separating my religious life from the rest of my life," she said. "I swore when I got out of that relationship, I would date someone who was Catholic."

She and her fiance want to have a traditional

Catholic wedding, including a Mass. She noted that she's annoyed when couples tell her that their wedding ceremonies are only going to last 15 minutes, as if the reception to follow is more important than the ceremony preceding it.

"I don't care if the ceremony lasts three hours," she said. "That's what you're there for, to have your marriage blessed in the presence of friends and family and God."

New trends

According to one recent survey, however, Henneberg and Rappold, are part of a shrinking group of young Catholics who value getting married

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