

WORLD & NATION

Marchers hail president on abortion policy

By Carol Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Optimism ran high at the kickoff rally for the annual March for Life Jan. 22, where dozens of speakers praised the two-day-old Bush administration and spoke of upcoming changes to abortion policy.

And toward the end of the two-hour rally held this year on the mud-covered grounds of the Washington Monument, participants cheered an announcement from the White House saying the Bush administration planned to reinstate the Mexico City policy, which had denied U.S. foreign aid to programs overseas that promote abortion.

President Clinton had reversed the policy in 1993 two days after he became president.

The announcement that President Bush would restore the previous policy was immediately praised by Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., who said the Bush administration was going to "sever the relationship with those who promote abortions."

And Baltimore Cardinal William H. Keeler, one of 29 prelates on the stand at the rally, said the restored policy would be a "tremendous step forward" for the new administration.

Throughout the rally, where tens of thousands gathered under a sunny blue sky but cold temperatures, several speakers spoke of the end of what they termed the



Andrea Dixon/Staff photographer

Thousands march from the Washington Monument to the Supreme Court building at the March for Life Jan. 22 in Washington, D.C. The annual march attracts pro-lifers from all over the country, and is always celebrated on the anniversary of the 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision, which legalized abortion.

"the long eight years" of the Clinton administration.

Nellie Gray, who has organized the March for Life since the first one in 1974 commemorating the 1973 Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion, told the crowd they were there to "help President Bush" in his efforts to stop abortion and ultimately "to overturn Roe vs. Wade."

"We will ultimately win the battle for

life," said Rep. Steve Chabot, R-Ohio, a Catholic, who pointed out that during last year's rally he had emphasized how Congress was trying to pass partial-birth legislation which ended up being "thwarted by President Clinton."

The crowd resoundingly booed the mention of the former president.

"Those folks in that house are gone," said Chabot, pointing in the direction of

the White House. "We have a new president that shares our belief that human life is sacred. We'll work hard to craft legislation that will once and for all outlaw partial-birth abortion in this country."

President Bush, who was invited to attend the rally, did not participate. Smith, a Catholic who chairs the Congressional Pro-Life Caucus, instead read the president's statement which commended the rally participants for their conviction, idealism and courage.

In his statement, Bush told rally participants that they shared a common goal "to work toward a day when every child is welcomed in life and protected by law."

"We know that this will not come easily, or all at once," he wrote. "But the goal leads us onward: to build a culture of life, affirming that every person, at every stage and season of life, is created equal in God's image."

Smith said Bush "offers a new hope and dream of ending the cruelty of abortion," and pointed out that he would not have been president without the pro-life vote.

Other politicians urged participants to elect pro-life senators in the next election, and many others pointed to the future of the pro-life movement by the large numbers of young people at the rally.

When Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., asked how many in the crowd were under 20, the crowd, with its clusters of school groups and families, broke into cheers and applause.

Former Rochester priest directs plans for World Youth Day

By Mike Mastromatteo
Catholic News Service

TORONTO — Planners of World Youth Day 2002 will expand upon an idea begun in Denver in 1993 and include service projects for young people, said Basilian Father Tom Rosica.

Young people will join their Canadian hosts in providing service to the poor, the homeless and the elderly, said Father Rosica, Canadian national director of World Youth Day 2002.

"This model of social service was attempted at the Denver World Youth Day, but it did not show up at other world youth days," he said. "I decided to build on what was started in 1993, in light of our strong responsibility to the community, the volunteer spirit necessary for World Youth Day, as well as to encourage collaboration and cooperation with our Christian churches and other religious

communities."

He said social service "provides a wonderful ecumenical and interfaith link. ... It will instill in others a sense of the responsibility and cooperation to make the world a better place. That's the whole reason why we're doing this."

"We're hoping that the introduction of this massive service program will be a significant part of Canada's contribution to World Youth Day," Father Rosica added.

Father Rosica hails from St. Ambrose Parish in Rochester.

As the national director of World Youth Day 2002, Father Rosica oversees logistical and administrative details for the smooth operation of the event.

The former director of the Newman Center at the University of Toronto has been back and forth to Rome five times since his appointment in August, and he expects the trips to continue until July of next year.

Scheduled for July 18-28, 2002, the event will see nearly half a million young people ages 18-35 gather in Toronto for a celebration of youth's gifts to the Catholic Church. This is scheduled to be the largest international youth day celebration since Pope John Paul II established the event in 1984. Youth delegations from some 150 countries are already making plans to attend, he said.

"We will be able to share our faith with young people from around the world in our homes and churches across the country," Father Rosica said.

Father Rosica said his staff of 18 is on schedule with event planning. A two-day practical information forum in Toronto Feb. 22-24 is the next item of business, followed by the arrival in Canada of the youth cross in April.

The youth cross, a symbol of World Youth Day ideals, has traveled through each of the host countries. It will be

passed to a delegation of Canadian young people at an April 8 Palm Sunday Mass in Rome's St. Peter's Basilica. From there, the youth cross will be sent to every Canadian diocese.

Father Rosica said the choice of Toronto for the 2002 event is a significant honor for the Canadian church. He said Pope John Paul II's 1984 and 1987 visits to the country left a lasting impression on the pontiff.

"I think the pope was impressed by the vastness of the country and the diversity of cultures," Father Rosica said. "He also showed a specific appreciation for the Native Canadian culture."

He said Catholics throughout North America can support the project through prayer, volunteering or cash contributions.

More information about WYD 2002 can be obtained on the national office's Web site at www.wyd2002.org.

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