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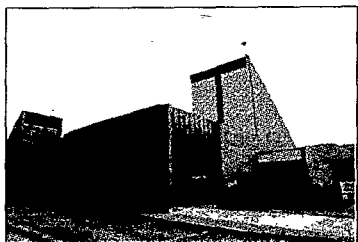
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Rochester Catholics hold a banner outside of the heavily policed Supreme Court Building in Washington, D.C., Jan. 22.

A birthday for abortion

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A flute-player standing on Madison Drive briefly stopped playing and looked at the pro-life demonstrators marching toward the Washington Monument.

"It's not a choice!" he shouted as a man threw some change into the street musician's suitcase. His words referred to a favorite pro-life slogan: "It's a child, not a choice."

Someone joked that a few days earlier, when anti-war protesters filled the streets of Washington, D.C., the flute player may have shouted, "No war with Iraq!" to endear himself to passing marchers. While the words of a street musician busking for change might be something less than genuine, there was no doubting the sincerity of tens of thousands of pro-life activists who had come to Washington, D.C., Jan. 22 to call for an end to legalized abortion. The throngs of activists braved bitterly cold temperatures to make their public stand for unborn children.

More than 300 such individuals came from the Diocese of Rochester alone, according to Jann K. Armantrout, diocesan life-issues coordinator. Taking buses overnight from various regions

of the diocese, the protesters converged at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception for a 7:30 a.m. Mass.

The Mass was concelebrated before an overflow congregation by several priests from around the country, including Father Tony Mugavero, pastor of St. Bridget's Parish in Rochester, a pro-life activist who has spent time in jail for his work against abortion. Bishop Sean P. O'Malley, OFM Cap., of Palm Beach, Fla., was principal celebrant for the Mass and noted that he had attended every March for Life since the U.S. Supreme Court legalized abortion in 1973.

"We are here to restore all of the guarantees of life that were trampled by *Roe v. Wade*," Bishop O'Malley said, adding that he thought that this may have been the coldest year for the March for Life. Yet he said it was worthwhile for the protesters to endure the chill in an effort to bring the country back in line with God's law following the Supreme Court's 1973 action to exempt

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Story by Rob Cullivan • Photos by Karin von Voigtlander