

CAMPAIGN HITS \$40 MILLION MARK

The Diocese of Rochester announced Oct. 28 that its Partners in Faith capital campaign had exceeded the \$40 million milestone towards its goal of \$50 million.

Bishop Matthew H. Clark called the success of the campaign thus far "truly remarkable."

"I am so thankful to all those who have given generously to our local church and to the hundreds of volunteers in the diocese who are working tirelessly to make this campaign an incredible success," Bishop Clark said. "The commitment to our mission is awe-inspiring."

BISHOP DECRIES LIMIT ON ADMITTING REFUGEES

WASHINGTON (CNS) — The Bush administration's Oct. 21 decision to allow only 70,000 refugees into the country next year "again falls short of historical admission levels reflecting the best humanitarian traditions of the American people," said Coadjutor Bishop Thomas G. Wenski of Orlando, Fla., chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Migration.

"The (Bush) administration must make more concerted efforts to identify refugees around the world in need of resettlement protection, particularly vulnerable refugees such as unaccompanied minors, women at risk and populations which have been mired in refugee camps for years," Bishop Wenski said. His committee had hoped at least 90,000 refugees would be accepted in 2004.

THIS WEEK'S READINGS

Sun., Nov. 2: Wisdom 3:1-9; Psalms 23:1-6; Romans 5:5-11; John 11:17-27

Mon., Nov. 3: Romans 11:29-36; Psalms 69:30-31, 33-34; Luke 14:12-14

Tue., Nov. 4: Romans 12:5-16A; Psalms 131:1-3; Luke 14:15-24

Wed., Nov. 5: Romans 13:8-10; Psalms 112:1-2, 4-5, 9; Luke 14:25-33

Thu., Nov. 6: Romans 14:7-12; Psalms 27:1, 4, 13-14; Luke 15:1-10

Fri., Nov. 7: Romans 15:14-21; Psalms 98:1-4; Luke 16:1-8

Sat., Nov. 8: Romans 16:3-9, 16, 22-27; Psalms 145:2-5, 10-11; Luke 16:9-15

Church leaders praise ban

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate passed the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act by a 64-34 margin Oct. 21.

President Bush has promised to sign the legislation, which passed the House three weeks earlier on a 281-142 vote.

Bush applauded the Senate action, saying the ban "will end an abhorrent practice and continue to build a culture of life in America."

Gail Quinn, executive director of the U.S. Catholic bishops' Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, said abortion advocates will battle the law in court, but said most Americans oppose killing partially born children.

"The American people — from every background, of every age, every faith and representing every segment of the political spectrum — reject the killing of children who are in the process of being born," she said in a statement released immediately after the vote.

"No human child should be subjected to such a brutal death," she added. "No woman should have to endure a partial-birth abortion. No society that considers itself civilized should allow it."

In the Diocese of Rochester, Bishop Matthew H. Clark issued a statement expressing gratitude to the House and Senate for passing the bill. He urged President Bush to sign the legislation because it would ban a "procedure that cruelly ends the life of a viable human being."

"The support of the Congress and Senate, and that of our president, will ensure that the most innocent and vulnerable among us are afforded the dignity and protection they so richly deserve," Bishop Clark said.

Father Brian Cool, chairman of the Diocese of Rochester's Public Policy Committee, noted that passage of the partial-birth abortion ban was "long overdue."

"Finally, members of Congress have listened to the majority of the public that have long sought the banning of what is known as partial-birth abortion," he said. He added that "the passage of this legislation is hopefully an indication that the educational, prayerful and advocacy efforts of the pro-life network is indeed working. If this law saves the life of only one child, it will indeed be worth the legislative and judicial efforts necessary to make it the law of the land."

Carol Crossed, a parishioner at Brighton's Queen of Peace Church, praised the "courageous 17" Democratic senators who voted for the ban. Noting pro-choice groups' stri-



Reuters/CNS

Sen. Rick Santorum, R-Pa., speaks during an Oct. 21 Capitol Hill press conference after the Senate overwhelmingly approved a bill to ban partial-birth abortion. Other supporters of the legislation look on. From left are Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn.; Rep. Steve Chabot, R-Ohio; and Rep. Joe Pitts, R-Pa. President George W. Bush has said he will sign the bill into law.

dent opposition to the ban, Crossed, president of the national group Democrats for Life, likened such groups to the National Rifle Association.

"As Democrats, we have been critical of the NRA, who opposed any and all limitations on gun ownership as a violation of their constitutionally guaranteed right to bear arms," she said. "The abortion lobby ... suffers from the same fanaticism as the NRA — an extremist position out of touch with the sensibilities of most Americans."

Quinn praised the Senate for approving the bill without an earlier amendment it had attached affirming the U.S. Supreme Court's 1973 landmark abortion decision, *Roe v. Wade*. The Senate amendment supporting the *Roe* decision was rejected Oct. 1 by a House-Senate conference committee working to reconcile differences between the original House and Senate versions of the bill.

"*Roe* is extreme in every way and has even been used to justify the brutal killing of infants who are almost completely born," Quinn said.

The Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act — widely described by commentators as the most significant anti-abortion legislation since 1973 — defines partial-birth abortion as the partial delivery of a fetus from the womb "for the purpose of performing an overt act that the person knows will kill the partially delivered living fetus" and then performing that act, killing the partial-

ly delivered fetus instead of delivering it alive.

Doctors who violate the ban could face a fine and up to two years in prison. The legislation allows an exception to save the life of the mother but does not include an exception for the mother's health.

A health provision would have rendered the legislation virtually meaningless because of the broad definition of maternal health given by the Supreme Court in 1973. President Clinton twice vetoed bills barring partial-birth abortions on grounds that there was no health exception in them.

Opponents of partial-birth abortion have fought for legislation to ban it since reports of its use in late-term abortions came to light in 1993. The procedure involves drawing most of the body of a live fetus through the birth canal, then inserting a device into its head to suction the brain out, killing the child and collapsing its head to make it easier to remove.

Jay Sekulow, chief counsel for the pro-life American Center for Law and Justice, said the law firm, "will work aggressively to see that this ban clears the legal challenges and survives the constitutional attacks that will follow."

"It's clear that both Congress and most Americans want to see this gruesome procedure outlawed," he said.

Contains reporting by Rob Cullivan in Rochester.