

# Events around nation mark 36th anniversary of Roe abortion decision

WASHINGTON - As the annual March for Life drew thousands to Washington Jan. 22, the 36th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion was marked around the country.

At Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, on the eve of the Roe anniversary, students were encouraged to attend a Holy Hour for life from 10 to 11 p.m. before embarking on an overnight journey to Washington for the March for Life.

The school "is very pro-life and since the mission of the school is education, our main focus on campus is educating students about the pro-life movement and how they can be pro-life," said Emily Espinola, Students for Life president, in a statement.

But her organization seeks to carry the pro-life message beyond campus, she said, with advocacy throughout the year such as praying outside abortion clinics four days a week, training sidewalk counselors, hosting pro-life speakers on campus, and connecting with other universities and colleges to train pro-life student leaders.

The Students for Life Coffeehouse also raises more than \$1,000 annually to donate to a local pregnancy help center.

In New Hampshire, Bishop John B. McCormack of Manchester said he looked proudly at the nation's progress toward victory over racism with the election of its first African-American president. He noted the beginning of a new administration "gives rise to an expectation" the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will come to an end and the needs of working-class and middle-class Americans will be addressed.

President Barack Obama is "a president for all of us," even those who didn't vote for him, he said in an opinion piece that has appeared in three New Hampshire daily newspapers, the Union Leader, the Telegraph and the Monitor.

He said change “is wonderfully manifest” in Obama but the bishop urged change in “our nation’s attitude toward human life, and there will be an end to abortion.”

“Racism and abortion are grave moral evils. As progress is made on one front, we cannot stand idly by while protections for the unborn slip away,” he said, urging Catholics to continue their opposition to abortion and to support respect for life at every stage.

In Pennsylvania, Auxiliary Bishop Paul J. Bradley of Pittsburgh celebrated a noon Mass at St. Mary of Mercy Church to coincide with the March for Life in Washington.

In Wisconsin, Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay planned to celebrate the diocese’s annual Respect Life Mass Jan. 23, with special prayers for the protection of all life – from conception until natural death. In the Archdiocese of Denver, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput celebrated a noon Mass Jan. 17 at the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.

In his column in the Jan. 21 issue of the Denver Catholic Register, the archdiocesan newspaper, the archbishop wrote: “By legalizing permissive abortion and drastically limiting voters’ ability to restrict it in any way, Roe set the foundations for an abortion industry that has wounded countless women and resulted in the killing of more than 40 million unborn children.”

Among pro-life events in Florida was a Jan. 17 march in the Diocese of St. Augustine.

In their annual statement to mark the Roe anniversary, the Catholic bishops of Florida outlined the number of ministries the church provides for pregnant women in need, such as the Gabriel Project, which provides assistance to mothers and their children, and Project Rachel, which offers counseling for women and men suffering “emotionally and spiritually” because of their involvement with abortion.

“The truth is abortion kills not only the tiny child conceived in the womb but also injures the mother, leaving her to cope with the emotional and physical pain,” the bishops stated.

In San Francisco, in a statement issued in advance of the Jan. 24 Walk for Life West

Coast, co-chair Eva Muntean said that she believes President Obama's record of support for legal abortion - despite his statements that he will make efforts to reduce the number of abortions - will draw a record turnout of marchers.