Abortion ruling anniversary marked

By DOUG LEBlANC
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A gathering of worshippers, mostly women, observed the 14th anniversary of legalized abortion Tuesday night at a solemn Mass of Human Life Prayer Vigil.

The service, held at St. Joseph Cathedral, marked the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, the U.S. Supreme Court decision on Jan. 22, 1973, that legalized abortion nationwide.

"We live in a century that is in some ways a humane century, yet it could be indubitably be known as the bloodiest," said Coadjutor Bishop Harry Flynn of Lafayette, citing abortion, both World Wars, the Holocaust and attempts at genocide as his examples.

The century has witnessed the horrible infanticide, killing of the handicapped and it has also witnessed the euthanasia of the aged," he said.

"All life, from conception in the womb to the very last breath, is of God and must be respected," Flynn said. "I must be for the unborn child, and I must be for the aged," he said. "I must work for the deterrence of nuclear war, and I must oppose the killing of the handicapped."

Flynn illustrated his homily with several stories of handicapped people, including his niece-in-law, who suffers from Alzheimer's disease.

"I stood there in that room and thought. This was all orchestrated by a person who never opened her eyes, who never spoke, who would have been rejected for 25 different reasons by the world," Flynn said.

"She was indeed the stone rejected who became the cornerstone," he said, borrowing a scripture phrase usually applied to Jesus Christ.

"What the world rejects could possibly — say, I would say probably — could be the one who has been touched by God in a special way," the bishop said.

After the service, several worshippers gathered for a brief reception and discussed their efforts against abortion.

"It's all prayer," said Newman Roblin, who has picketed outside abortion clinics since 1974. "If I have all these people back home praying for Jesus to work through me, something will get done."

Roblin said he sometimes tries to dismay young women from going through with their planned abortions.

"My most effective work is to be at the clinic whenever I can," Roblin said. "It would be nice if I could get a priest out there with me sometimes."

"I firmly believe the only thing that will ever curb abortion is by constant, fervent prayer," said Brother Jude of the Epiphany Monks of Perpetual Adoration. "It can move mountains and it can close clinics."

"The people of the order prays two hours a day about abortion and other matters," he said.

"I would say that whatever you do for the least of my brothers you do for me," Brother Jude said, quoting Christ. "We have the number of abortion clinics that we do because of a lack of love."

Claus Davigt of the Knights of Columbus said an anti-abortion motorcade will begin at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Catholic Life Center and will proceed to the State Capitol. Activists will meet in the capitol Rotunda if Saturday's weather is as gloomy as Tuesday night's, he said.

Tom Abel, director of the Catholic diocese's Family Life Department and organizer of the prayer vigil, said he plans to make it an annual event.