

Thousands March Against Murder, Despite Bitter Temperatures

Thousands braved bitter cold temperatures for a “March for Life” in downtown Chicago on Sunday, five days before the 43rd anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court’s Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion nationwide.

Demonstrators held yellow balloons with “life” printed on them as organizers passed around rosary beads and others danced to music to keep warm in temperatures that hovered just above 0 degrees Fahrenheit (-18 Celsius).

“This is about the soul of our nation that we gathered here today,” Archbishop Blase Cupich of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, told a crowd that organizers said numbered about 5,000. “As we bundle up in the cold today, we want to make sure the children are also born into a world that warmly welcomes them.”

Many states have imposed new restrictions on abortion in recent years, some of which have been challenged in court.

In its first abortion case since 2007, the U.S. Supreme Court is expected to rule by late June on a Texas abortion law imposing restrictions on clinics and physicians that conduct abortions, which critics say is intended to limit abortion access.

The Chicago march, now in its third year, offers a Midwest alternative for those unable to attend the larger march held in Washington, D.C. every Jan. 22, said Emily Zender, president of March for Life Chicago.

In addition to Archbishop Cupich, speakers included Corey

Brooks, a politically active pastor of a mostly black Chicago church; and Wilfredo De Jesus of the evangelical New Life Covenant Church, a prominent Hispanic pastor.

Brooks said he wanted to take the “fight of the pro-life to African-American community.”

“This is a leading cause of death for African-Americans,” he said, referring to abortion.

The issue also has received increased national attention in the past year because of attempts by Republican legislators to cut funding for Planned Parenthood, which provides health services for women, including abortions.

“I think this is the most important social justice issue,” said Maggie Ilhean, one of the marchers in Chicago, as she held onto a statue of a pregnant Virgin Mary. {eo}

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