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1974

JAN. 22

In response to the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion nationwide, and behind the leadership of Catholic Nellie Gray, the first National March for Life takes off. The annual march continues today, now with a focus on legislation and the pro-abortion policies that exist in several states.

1979

OCT. 1

Pope John Paul II begins a week-long journey across the U.S. in Boston, where he celebrated Mass on the Boston Common. Over the course of the visit, the Holy Father also addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York and met with youth at Madison Square Garden. He celebrated massive outdoor Masses in New York City; Philadelphia; Des Moines, Iowa; and Chicago. He concluded the trip in Washington, where he became the first pope to visit the White House. The trip was the first of five major visits Pope John Paul made to the U.S. during his pontificate.

1983

MAY 3

The nation's Catholic bishops issue their landmark document "The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response," denouncing the arms race of the Cold War. The document, which was not well received by President Ronald Reagan, was one of the earliest instances of the nation's Catholic leaders taking decisive stands on significant issues in the U.S. and around the world.

SEPT. 22

Pope Francis arrives in Maryland for his first and only visit to the U.S. as pontiff. The next day, Pope Francis met with President Barack Obama, led a papal parade on the National Mall, and celebrated the Mass of Canonization for St. Junipero Serra outside the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. The Holy Father then

traveled to New York, where he addressed the United Nations General Assembly, held a papal procession through Central Park, and celebrated Mass at Madison Square Garden. Pope Francis' trip concluded with him celebrating the closing Mass for the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia on Sept. 27.

2015

APRIL 15

Pope Benedict XVI touches down in Maryland for the first and only visit to the U.S. during his pontificate. The visit took place from April 15 to April 20. Pope Benedict began his trip in Washington, meeting with President George W. Bush. In a major milestone, he also met privately with victims of clerical sexual abuse. He concluded his visit to Washington by celebrating a public Mass at Nationals Park. The Holy Father then traveled to New York, where he addressed the United Nations General Assembly, visited the Ground Zero Memorial, and celebrated a public Mass at Yankee Stadium.

2008

JUNE

In response to the clergy sex abuse crisis in the Archdiocese of Boston earlier that year, the U.S. bishops, at their annual springtime general assembly, write, and approve the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. Commonly known as the Dallas Charter, the document sets protocols for accountability, victim support, and prevention that are still followed today.

2002**2020**

OCT. 27

Amy Coney Barrett is sworn into the Supreme Court. Barrett is the 15th Catholic to serve on the nation's high court. Currently, she is one of six Catholic justices, alongside Clarence Thomas, John Roberts, Samuel Alito, Sonia Sotomayor, and Brett Kavanaugh.

2023

JAN. 20

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, reads a message from Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, issued on behalf of Pope Francis to thousands gathered for the annual March for Life in Washington — the first since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned by the Supreme Court the previous June. As part of the message, Cardinal Pierre told attendees that "His Holiness trusts that Almighty God will strengthen the commitment of all, especially the young, to persevere in their efforts aimed at protecting human life in all its stages."

2025

MAY 8



Cardinal Robert F. Prevost, the Chicago-born prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops under Pope Francis, is elected the 267th pope and takes the name Pope Leo XIV, and becomes the first-ever American pope.

2026

Catholicism, like the whole of the United States, has come a long way in 250 years. Not only do Catholics make up about 20% of the U.S. population, but there are 196 dioceses, approximately 17,500 parishes, over 200 Catholic colleges and universities, and Catholics — lay and religious — with influence in all sectors of public life.