

Rain doesn't dampen colors, spirits at March for Life rally

Julie Asher Catholic News Service | Jan. 23, 2012



From left: Spencer Green, 14, Jake Recker, 13, Jarred Trumm, 13, and Lee Beringer, 14, attend the National Prayer Vigil for Life on Sunday at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. The students from Aquin Elementary School in Cascade, Iowa, made a 22-hour bus trip to be on hand for the vigil and March for Life in the nation's capital. (CNS photo/Nancy Phelan Wiechec)

WASHINGTON -- Mark Hosbein stood on the corner of a busy Washington intersection under the steady rain Monday with a small duffel bag at his feet and a simple message for passers-by: "Please consider spiritually adopting an unborn baby who is in danger of abortion."

Handing a reporter one of his brochures, Hosbein said as president of Hearts For Life, he is following the lead of the late Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, who promoted the idea of spiritual adoptions for the unborn years ago.

People who commit to such an adoption agree to pray once a day for a year for an unborn child, he explained. "Our belief is God will save the life of the baby. It's a simple and powerful devotion."

Hosbein, a member of St. Lawrence Parish in Indianapolis, said in the past five or six years, his organization has passed out 100,000 of his brochures.

He was among several people handing out signs and literature to pro-lifers as they walked toward the March for Life rally on the National Mall near the Smithsonian Castle. From the castle, the Washington Monument in one direction and the Capitol in the other were barely visible, as they were shrouded in fog.

The weather in Washington was uncooperative, with intermittent rain and temperatures hovering in the high 30s.

But as most years when the weather was bad, the tens of thousands of pro-lifers, a majority of them in high school and college, were undeterred, descending on the nation's capital to mark the 39th anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortion.

As they streamed toward the rally site from various points, rally-goers carried signs that declared their pro-life views. Among the messages were: "Adoption is an option," "Every time a baby is aborted, love is denied," "Praying for a culture of life" and "If it's not a baby, you're not pregnant."

One woman wrote her message on the back of her yellow rain poncho: "God is pro-life: Thou shalt not kill."
One group carried yellow balloons that simply said "Life."

Near the rally site stood Erin Connelly from the Syracuse, N.Y., area, who was wearing a handmade sandwich board that read, "Save the baby humans!" A member of St. Patrick Parish in Chittengo, Connelly said it was her second rally and march.

She said she was inspired for the day ahead by the Mass celebrated that morning by Cardinal-designate Timothy M. Dolan of New York at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

She said she doesn't know about other communities, but in her community back home, there is a lot of respect for life.

A group of young people from the Diocese of Victoria, Texas, stood near the speakers' platform. They were all wearing yellow hooded sweatshirts with "Death Roe Survivor" on the back. The slogan was created by 16-year-old Ted Wenske, a member of St. Joseph Parish in Moulton, Texas. He was there, he said, "because life from the moment of conception to death is sacred. Life should always be treated with respect."

Ashley Martinez, 13, of Potomac Oaks, Md., said her parents had made her attend, but she said she does believe the nation "should stop abortion because it's bad. It's a human life."

Boston University junior Brad Agostinelli of Rochester, N.Y., said he has grown in his Catholic faith over the past couple of years and his conviction that abortion is wrong had only grown stronger.

Heather Wilson, 28, a member of a nondenominational Christian church in Pennsylvania, held a sign that said, "Stop unborn pain."

She told CNS, "I'm here to put my feet in the direction of what my heart believes."

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