

Buffalo joins thousand in Washington, D.C. March for Life

Through the cold, the distance and the critics, members of the Diocese of Buffalo joined thousands of other pro-lifers to peacefully and prayerfully protest abortion.

Five busloads of people of all ages made a two-day pilgrimage to Washington, D.C., to participate in the 44th annual March for Life and to bring attention to the plight of aborted babies, which took place Jan. 26-27.

The March for Life began in Washington, D.C., as a small demonstration and rapidly grew to be the largest pro-life event in the world. The peaceful demonstration has continued on the anniversary of the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision, which legalized abortion on demand.

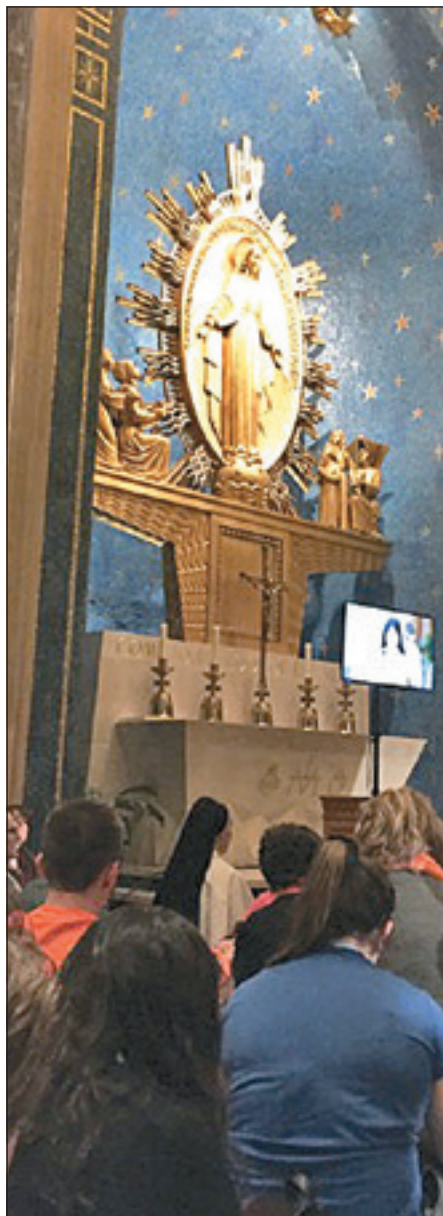
Along with the march from the National Mall to the Supreme Court building, rallies were held and guest speakers delivered powerful messages. This year speakers included Vice President Mike Pence; Kellyanne Conway, the counselor to the president; Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, archbishop of New York; pro-life activist Abby Johnson; NFL player Benjamin Watson; Virginia gubernatorial candidate Corey Stewart; and Mexican actress Karyme Lozano. Pence became the first vice president and the highest-ranking government official to speak at the march. "It was very edifying to be with so many people that are pro-life," said Joe Van Volkenburg, senior associate campus minister for Canisius College.

A group of 18 from Canisius College's Students for Life joined the Buffalo convoy led by the diocesan Office of Pro-Life Activities. Along the way, they heard witness talks from other pilgrims. One student told of her experience of being adopted, telling her travel companions, "I thank God everyday for my biological mother, that she chose life, and I thank God everyday for my adopted mother," related Van Volkenburg.

During the march, the pro-lifers dealt with opposition from pro-

choice advocates.

"We never had this before," said Van Volkenburg, a veteran of the march. "We had hecklers on microphones saying things against the Church and against this issue of pro-life. I think it was the same guy. We ran into him several times. The reaction of the pilgrims was very peaceful and prayerful. People had peace at the center even when people were yelling at us."



COURTESY OF CAMILLE M. PONTRELLO/CANISIUS COLLEGE

Canisius College Students for Life members attend Mass inside a crowded Chapel of the Miraculous Medal in the National Basilica as part of their pilgrimage to the March for Life in Washington, D.C.



COURTESY OF CAMILLE M. PONTRELLO/CANISIUS COLLEGE

The Students for Life Club at Canisius College attended the March for Life in Washington, D.C.



COURTESY OF ST. FRANCIS HIGH SCHOOL

St. Francis High School in Athol Springs had 37 participants at the March for Life, plus one more when Bishop Richard J. Malone joined them.