

March for Life tone upbeat with 2014 election successes

written by Aprille Hanson Spivey |



Bishop Anthony B. Taylor shares his homily during the annual Mass for Life Jan. 18. (Malea Hargett)



Deacon Danny Hartnedy of St. Edward Church in Little Rock holds up the chalice while Bishop Anthony B. Taylor offers prayers during the Mass for Life in the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock Jan. 18. (Malea Hargett)



Team Jesus from Christ the King Church in Little Rock provided music for the Mass for Life Jan. 18. (Malea Hargett)



Anyone who had lost a child no matter what the cause could sign the Book of Innocents and roses were placed before the altar. (Malea Hargett)



The March for Life took place Jan. 18 around the State Capitol grounds in Little Rock. (Malea Hargett)



Pro-Life supporters at the annual March for Life, Jan. 18. (Malea Hargett)



Thousands, including new Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, took part in the annual March for Life Jan. 18. (Malea Hargett)



Several Catholic parishes from around the state traveled to Little Rock to participate in the annual March for Life Jan. 18. (Malea Hargett)



New Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson was the keynote speaker at the March for Life Jan. 18. (Malea Hargett)



Many Catholic youth participated in this year's March for Life on Jan. 18. (Malea Hargett)

[Previous](#)
[Next](#)

See Bishop Taylor's complete homily from the Mass for Life:

Pay attention to when God is tugging at your heart

Jill Guilmet, a member of Immaculate Conception Church in North Little Rock, began the March for Life toward the steps of the Capitol in Little Rock Jan. 18 with a most effective pro-life sign — her first child, 5-month-old Trinity.

"We've been pro-life advocates since she was in the womb," Guilmet smiled, adding, "Actually before that because life is sacred. My best friend told me having a child is the greatest gift you can give yourself, and she is the greatest gift."

Sponsored by Arkansas Right to Life, the annual March for Life aims to bring attention to pro-life issues.

Thousands attended this year's march, including many state and U.S. elected officials, including U.S. Sens. Tom Cotton and John Boozman, U.S. Reps. Rick Crawford, French Hill and Bruce Westerman and Lt. Gov. Tim Griffin.

It is the first time in Arkansas where all the U.S. congressmen and state constitutional officers and most state senators and representatives are pro-life.

The march was broadcast for the first time on Faith Talk radio station 99.5. It is the 42nd anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on Roe v. Wade that makes abortion legal in all nine months of pregnancy.

New Governor speaks

The keynote speaker was newly elected Gov. Asa Hutchinson, providing a notable boost to this year's march attendance, said Arkansas Right to Life executive director Rose Mimms, who coordinates the march.

"To have the governor at the capitol marching with us is just a huge improvement over the tone at the state capitol over the last eight years. We want a governor who will stand up for life," Mimms said. "We've killed over 100,000 plus babies in Arkansas since Roe v Wade. How can we continue to kill the greatest natural resource we have in our children?"

Hutchinson's presence attracted more secular media than some past marches and his speech stirred the crowd.

"Twenty-eight years ago I attended my first Right to Life rally on the steps of this very spot. I spoke on the importance of protecting innocent life. I was present as a newcomer to politics. I was a novice, so I did not know that a serious candidate was not supposed to attend such a controversial-type rally," Hutchinson said, adding how far politics in Arkansas have come, with an entirely pro-life delegation, many present. "Ladies and gentlemen, times have changed, not just across Arkansas but across this nation and they have changed because of your efforts, your consistent efforts every year in being here and holding up the flag and saying you're pro-life and saying Roe v. Wade needs to be reversed. The credit goes to you."

Father T.J. Hart, pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in North Little Rock (Marche), gave the opening prayer.

Catholics speak out

Juanita Acosta, 15, a member of Blessed Sacrament Church in Jonesboro, attended Weekend Extravaganza and the march for the second time.

"I think it's really good to be doing this; babies shouldn't be aborted," Acosta said, adding prayers that President Barack Obama will see how important it is to pass laws to stop abortions.

As signs that read "America God is watching," "Stop abortion now" and "Abortion stops a beating heart," dotted the crowd, Chris Teague, a member of St. Joseph Church in Tontitown, held up a stick with a small statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe at the top.

"We're praying for her to intercede and stop the massacre happening in the United States and around the world," said Teague, a father of four. "Life starts at conception and they (babies) are made in the image of God."

Terry and Joann O'Brien, members of Sacred Heart Church in Hot Springs Village, have been attending the March for Life for about seven years.

"We believe in the cause. I think this is a modern day holocaust," Joann said of abortion, with her husband adding of lawmakers who approve abortion, "You're approving murder."

'Not by chance'

Bishop Anthony B. Taylor attended the march and gave a moving homily at this year's Mass for Life, held at the Statehouse Convention Center in Little Rock. The annual Mass held before the march. Other spiritual events leading up to the march include adoration, a rosary and respect life vigil, which was held at the Cathedral of St. Andrew. Bishop Taylor emphasized the gathering is not merely by "chance" — "You came in response to a call from God," he told the crowd of hundreds. The Mass readings were God's call of Samuel (1 Samuel 3: 3B-10, 19) and Jesus' call of discipleship to Andrew and Simon Peter (John 1:35-42).

While focused on the unborn, Bishop Taylor also emphasized the need for more male and female religious vocations in Pope Francis' proclaimed "Year of Consecrated Life," explaining that defending all life is connection to living a religious life.

"Since everything having to do with fidelity to God is interconnected, our response to God's call to give witness to the sanctity of life from the first moment of conception begins, today, with Mass, with prayer to God who listens, and then challenges us to listen to God like Samuel did, to God who uses moments like these not only to invite us to follow Jesus more closely, but indeed to embrace fully our own role in God's plan — that call which God has planted in you from the first moment of your conception. That's the only pro-life witness that is really complete. 'Speak Lord, your servant is listening,'" Bishop Taylor said.

Anyone who had lost a child no matter what the cause could sign the Book of Innocents and roses were placed before the altar.

Webcam Abortions

This year, Arkansas Right to Life has dedicated itself to banning webcam abortions in Arkansas. Arkansas SB53 was filed in the state senate, with sponsor Sen. Missy Irvin of Mountain View and HB1076 filed in the House, with sponsor Rep. Julie Mayberry of Hensley.

Mimms said drug-induced abortions are on the rise in Arkansas, mainly facilitated by Planned Parenthood clinics in Little Rock and Fayetteville, recently taken over by Planned Parenthood of the Heartland, which covers the Midwest. Arkansas currently has one surgical abortion doctor who will soon be retiring. Because of this, Mimms predicts webcam abortions will begin in Arkansas, as Planned Parenthood of the Heartland has pushed this method in Iowa, Illinois and Idaho.

By now, the pro-life signs from the march have been stored away and the capitol steps are quiet after being filled with prayerful intentions, but that doesn't mean the work is over. Catholics throughout the state can contact their political leaders to encourage passing the ban on webcam abortions and most importantly continue to pray, Mimms said.

"Pray for all of the efforts of pro-life in Arkansas and get involved. If they can do nothing but pray please pray and pray every day for not only the conversion of those who support legal abortion ... but for those that are on the frontlines in crisis pregnancy centers, for those trying to pass laws to protect the unborn and their mothers and the (political) candidates standing strong for life," said Mimms, a member of St. Theresa Church in Little Rock. "Just to do something; we all should be doing something."