

**Homily Outline for the Mirror the March Respect Life Mass
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
January 29, 2021**

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- I. Over the past several years I have participated in the national March for Life in Washington, D.C.
 - A. Each year, we have had several busloads of young people travel from our diocese to the March for Life.
 - B. After attending the Vigil Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in our nation's Capital, we would have our own diocesan Mass at which we would fill St. Peter's Church on Capitol Hill at 10:00 AM, prior to the rally on the National Mall, followed by the March to the U.S. Supreme Court Building to protest the Court's 1973 ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, legalizing abortion.
 - C. This year, in light of safety concerns due to the coronavirus pandemic and the recent violence at the Capitol, the March for Life is not taking place in person in Washington, but is being held virtually across the nation.
 - D. Providentially, many of you were already planning on participating locally, and so we "Mirror the March" here in the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois.
 - E. Following our Mirror the March Respect Life Mass here at our Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, the mother church of our diocese, we will march peacefully and prayerfully past the Governor's Mansion and the Illinois Supreme Court to our State Capitol Building.
 1. In 2017, the Illinois General Assembly passed the Act Concerning Abortion of 2017 (House Bill 40), signed by Governor Bruce Rauner, providing for taxpayer funding of abortion.
 2. In 2019, the Illinois General Assembly passed the so-called Reproductive Health Act of 2019 (Senate Bill 25), signed into law by Governor J. B. Pritzker, purporting to declare abortion to be a fundamental right, while also declaring that an unborn baby does not have independent rights under the laws of this state.
 3. We pray that for these to be repealed and for *Roe v. Wade* to be overturned.

II. We have our work cut out for us.

- A. Just yesterday, the day before our March for Life, President Biden signed an executive order restoring US government funding for foreign nonprofits that perform or promote abortions.
- B. In response to President Biden's order that taxpayer funds will be used to pay for abortions internationally, Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City in Kansas, Chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities, and Bishop David J. Malloy of Rockford, Illinois, Chairman of the Committee on International Justice and Peace, said: "It is grievous that one of President Biden's first official acts actively promotes the destruction of human lives in developing nations. This Executive Order is antithetical to reason, violates human dignity, and is incompatible with Catholic teaching. We and our brother bishops strongly oppose this action. We urge the President to use his office for good, prioritizing the most vulnerable, including unborn children. As the largest non-government health care provider in the world, the Catholic Church stands ready to work with him and his administration to promote global women's health in a manner that furthers integral human development, safeguarding innate human rights and the dignity of every human life, beginning in the womb. To serve our brothers and sisters with respect, it is imperative that care begin with ensuring that the unborn are free from violence, recognizing every person as a child of God. We hope the new administration will work with us to meet these significant needs."
- C. I agree one hundred per cent with the statement of Archbishop Naumann and Bishop Malloy in condemning this Executive Order that "is incompatible with Catholic teaching."
- D. President Biden spoke of unity in his Inaugural Address. Sadly, his promotion of abortion will serve only to divide our nation further.

III. In contrast, we are united when we stand for life, and so the theme for the 2021 March for Life is: TOGETHER STRONG: LIFE UNITES!

- A. Together, our witness is much stronger than if we were to try to stand alone.
- B. Our shared respect for life from conception to natural death unites us and makes us stronger.
- C. This is not just a protest ... TOGETHER, WE GATHER TO CELEBRATE LIFE.
 - 1. We celebrate each and every life, from the moment of conception.

2. We envision a world where every life is celebrated, valued, and protected.

IV. Our scripture readings for today's Mass give us strong encouragement for our pro-life efforts.

A. Our first reading from the Letter to the Hebrews (Heb 10:32-39) says that we will suffer abuse and affliction when we give public witness to our faith, such as our belief in the sanctity of human life and the evil of abortion, but we are told to be confident, for it will have a great reward.

B. The passage today from the Gospel of Saint Mark (Mk 4:26-34) reminds us that the seeds of faith are small when they are first planted, but they eventually yield an abundant harvest.

C. So too, we must not let ourselves be discouraged, for discouragement comes from the devil, but we must be confident that even our smallest efforts can bear great fruit.

V. Back in the middle of the 19th century, most people assumed that slavery would always exist in this nation; people thought that its spread might be limited, at best.

A. President Abraham Lincoln remained strong in his convictions in the face of fierce opposition, and eventually his efforts led to the abolition of slavery in the U.S.

B. So too, it may seem to us that abortion is here to stay, but we cannot give up hope or slacken our efforts to bring about an end to the scourge of abortion.

VI. May God give us this grace. Amen.