

The

Net

March 2015



Worker

March for Life 2015

“Every Life is a Gift”

By Maria Brockmeier

Thursday, January 22nd 2015, Washington, DC ...

It was a balmy 40 degrees. Well, only balmy if you consider that most Marches for Life are held under extreme winter conditions of cold, and sometimes snow or ice. January 22nd is the day in 1973 that Roe v. Wade made abortion legal in all nine months of pregnancy. So January 22nd is when the marchers from all over the U.S. make their way to Washington, DC to be a voice for the voiceless.

I traveled to Washington, DC on the bus from St. Catherine Parish, Glen Rock, NJ. We were joined by students from Immaculate Heart Academy and St. Joseph Regional High School. We traveled first to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. We walked around to see its 70 chapels which line both sides of the Basilica. There was a mass concluding as we arrived which was overflowing with the marchers ready to set out on the March for Life.

Other marchers had spent the morning delivering roses (symbol of the movement) to members of Congress.

Others had gathered since noon on the National Mall to hear religious and political speakers.

Our group made our way to the subway from the Basilica and headed to the beginning of the March on Constitution Ave to walk toward the Supreme Court. The crowds were ready to go. We were greeted by a huge group from St. John Cantius Parish in Chicago which provided a joyful, enthusiastic beginning to the March. These “Crusaders for Life” led everyone in cheers from their usual street corner marked with towers of yellow balloons. They wore florescent yellow hoodies and sang, drummed and danced to a series of synchronized chants as others passed by and often took pictures of them. Someone in the group remarked: “It’s a big dance party, and we’re just dancing for life.”

The 42nd March for Life was led by a high school from Fargo, North Dakota which closed down the school so that entire population could head to Washington to march. Their long trip was sponsored by donations at home.

We arrived at the Supreme Court to see more speakers

A stylized logo featuring the words "LIFE IS PRECIOUS" in a bold, blocky font. Above the word "LIFE", there are several simple line-art figures of people of various heights and shapes, some with their arms raised, suggesting a crowd or a group of people. The figures are integrated into the top of the letters of "LIFE".

LIFE
IS PRECIOUS

from *The Silent No More Campaign* speak at microphones about their heartbreaking experiences as they held signs saying “I regret my abortion.”

After standing for a while at the Supreme Court and observing all the passing joyful, prayerful groups, such as exuberant youths chanting “We! Are! The Pro-Life Generation!” we headed back to the metro to get back to our bus to NJ.

“The crowds were massive,” March for Life president Jeanne Monahan-Mancini said “I’ve never seen anything like it in my entire life.”

It would seem like the March would be somber or gloomy but one author wrote:

“Despite this, we are full of joy. Our mood is prayerful, even somber at times, but we are saturated with hope. Our marching is not in vain; we know that, coupled with the power of prayer and fearless witness, our throngs of believers will make a difference.

The chair of the March for Life, Patrick Kelly expressed the March this way: “We are here because we know the truth. We know that every life is a gift. And we know this truth is not just “a Catholic thing” or “an Evangelical thing” or “a Jewish thing”

or “a Mormon thing.” Of course it is all those things but it also “a Human thing.” Every human life is a gift. And so we march. We march in what has become the largest Human Rights demonstration in the world. We march because we have the courage to think for ourselves and to face the truth about human life. We march because little lives matter.

Vulnerable, imperfect lives matter. We march to be a voice for those who don’t have a voice. We march because the March for Life IS their voice...in Washington and around the world. We march because every life is a gift.”

‘We march to be a voice for those who don’t have a voice. ’

**Pope Francis@Pontiflex:
“Every Life is a
Gift.#marchforlife”**



A Heart Full of Love

By MaryEllen Love

Behold Jesus Christ crucified, who is the only foundation of our hope; He is our Mediator and Advocate; the victim and sacrifice for our sins. He is goodness and patience itself; His mercy is moved by the tears of sinners, and he never refuses pardon and grace to those who ask it with a truly contrite and humbled heart."

-Saint Charles Borromeo



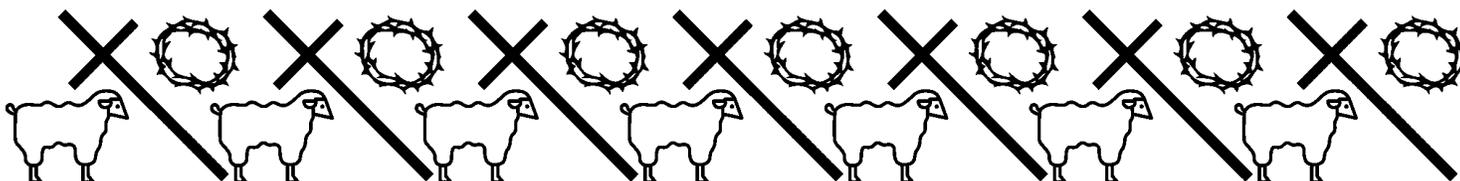
How quickly the season of Lent has returned! A time for self-reflection, penance and prayer. A time to pull ourselves away from the lures of the world to take a look within our hearts and to turn our eyes toward God. I would guess that most of you have seen a picture of Jesus' heart, his Sacred Heart as revealed to St. Margaret-Mary of Alacoque through apparitions in yet another attempt to communicate with us his divine love for humanity. His heart is crowned with thorns, clearly in a state of suffering. In one of Jesus' apparitions he said "my enemies crowned my head with thorns and my friends crowned my heart". Some friends we are! And yet, despite the suffering we cause, our merciful Lord (and friend) has a heart filled with love beyond measure for each of us; a heart that continually desires for us to be reconciled with him. That is what this season is all about, restoring our relationship with God; putting ourselves in right order and rejoining our lives and our hearts with God who is all good and deserving of all our love.

How about our hearts? What will we find this Lent when we venture inward and take a look

within our hearts? A joyful heart? A sorrowful heart? A hardened heart? Whatever the condition, God offers to make us all anew. All we need to do, with the help of God's grace, is to approach God with a contrite heart - the most important step in reconciling ourselves with him.

St. Paul in Chapter 5 of his second letter to the Corinthians "implores us, on behalf of Christ, to be reconciled with God." He tells us, "For our sake he made him to be sin who did not know sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him." St. Paul used his gifts to awaken those in Corinth with the truths that he knew about reconciling oneself with God. We too should take St. Paul's words to heart. We may not be of Corinth and we may not be persecuting Jesus the same way St. Paul did in his days as Saul of Tarsus, however, our sins most certainly sit upon the crown of thorns that pierces Jesus's heart.

Maybe this Lent we can dare to turn our eyes toward Christ with an honest and contrite heart and dare to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and be made anew. For a triple dare, just maybe we can go all out and dare to allow God to work within our hearts and lead us with renewed spirits in his direction.



WELCOME TO FR. CAMILO

By Pam Lobley

As of June 2014, Fr. Camilo Cruz became a part of our St. Peter's family. Many of us have met and enjoyed getting to know him, but for those of us who haven't, I thought it would be fun to interview him for the Net Worker.

Fr. Camilo came to us from St. Cassian in Upper Montclair. He grew up in Colombia, and he always wanted to be a priest. He did go to college for a year, studying political science, but the call to priesthood remained strong and he entered the seminary. His sister was here, living in Weehawken, but when he had the opportunity to come to the United States, he was unsure about it. His impression of Americans came mostly from the way the U.S. government policies had been conducted towards Latin American countries over many decades. But he did end up coming, and he has found Americans to be warm-hearted and welcoming.

A major focus for Fr Camilo right now is the parish experience "Family Key to Faith", which is in keeping a general family theme: there is a Synod of the Family this year taking place in Rome, and the Pope will be coming to Philadelphia in 2015 for the World Meeting of Families. St. Peter's initiative is designed to welcome and support all types of families, recognizing that families these days can be extremely diverse in nature. The idea is to make our parish a place where people can come and discern what ministry they may be called to. Little by little, we hope to involve more people. Right now we have many ministries, but they are run by a small group of people, and we want to involve more people to increase the breadth of our reach.

Families take many different shapes these days. Family is the key to faith, and though people inside our church are all different, we gather around the table and share our worries, desires and hopes. We are equal. Recognizing that we all carry struggles and burdens no matter what our families look like, we walk the journey together and find ways to heal each other.

As part of the program, ten families have been

enlisted as volunteers to host Fr. Mike and Fr. Camilo in their homes for some visits. The families will talk with the priests, helping the priests to understand what their particular concerns or needs may be, and from them Fr. Mike and Fr. Camilo will learn how St. Peter's can better serve them.

As Fr. Camilo points out, "River Edge is going through a cultural transition, we have families from countries in Asia, India, Sri Lanka, and many countries from Latin America. We are no longer just Irish and Italian people. This is a rich culture that we can take advantage of as a way to invigorate our parish and our relationships. We want to welcome all to our family of faith and invite them to get involved. In this way our parish will be refreshed and energized."



I wondered if, growing up in Colombia, the Lenten or Easter traditions were any different than in the United States. Fr. Camilo told me that Lent for them is not so much about fasting, but more of a time to seek a close relationship with God through prayer and compassionate actions with the sick and the needy. Holy Week receives much more emphasis than Easter Sunday itself, with Good Friday being the most important day. He noted with some amusement that the crucifixes in the Spanish tradition are much more expressive than the clean American versions. The Easter Vigil is the main culmination of Holy Week, with Easter itself being more of a quiet aftermath, rather than a day of big meals and family gatherings as it is in the U.S. Suffering is something that Latin American people relate to because of their history, and they imbue the Holy Week and the cross with that passion.

I asked Fr. Camilo if he had a favorite saint, and he spoke about Archbishop Oscar Romero, who was Archbishop of San Salvador during El Salvador's brutal civil war, Romero became the "bishop of the poor" for his work defending the Salvadoran people. Though not a saint at the moment, the Pope has just announced that will be beatified, possibly as early as this year.

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the Apostle Parish,
River Edge,
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EDITOR
Pam Lobley

DESIGN & LAYOUT
Ana DiBisceglie

**CONTACT
INFORMATION:**
pambill22@verizon.net