

“Happy Advent” and Congratulations!

You are receiving this message because you and/or at least one youth for whom you are responsible has been included in the official list of pilgrims for the 2019 March for Life Pilgrimage to Washington DC on January 17-19, 2019. There will be additional information sent out in the next few weeks regarding specific times, logistical details, and instructions for departure. This particular email is a confirmation of your spot on the 2019 March for Life Pilgrimage, an overview of general pilgrimage information and current activities, and a summary of what can be expected during the next few weeks.

Although there is a lot of information included in this message, please take a few minutes to review. This might best be done on a device other than a phone.

Current Status of Registration / Payment

On-line registration and payment will remain open; however, to ensure our focus for the next four weeks can remain primarily on preparations for the trip for those pilgrims who have already signed up, all new registrants will be added to the WAITING LIST and processed either as time allows or as spaces open up. Additional instructions will also be added to the [March for Life Pilgrimage website](#) .

Prior to Friday, December 28 @ 5:00PM, the Respect Life Office will follow up with all pilgrims for whom additional information or payment is still needed. Pilgrims will then have until **Friday, January 4 @ 5:00PM** to either complete registration and payment or make arrangements with the Respect Life Office to do so. If completed registration and payment, or arrangements to do so, are not finalized with the Respect Life Office by Friday, January 4 @ 5:00PM, pilgrims may risk forfeiting their spot on the OFFICIAL pilgrim list and being added to the WAITING pilgrim list (see “Waiting Lists” below).

Waiting Lists – The information below will be posted to the March for Life Pilgrimage website for the benefit of individuals who will be contacting the Respect Life Office for the first time during the next month.

- All pilgrims who registered or paid, or who contacted the Respect Life Office to make special arrangements, on or before the Wednesday, Dec. 12, 2018 deadline have been included on the OFFICIAL pilgrim list.
- New pilgrims who submit **both registration and payment** after Wednesday, Dec. 12 @ 11:59 p.m., but before Friday, January 4 @ 5:00PM, will be added to the WAITING pilgrim list on a first come, first serve basis. As pilgrims drop off the OFFICIAL pilgrim list, individuals from the WAITING pilgrim list will be contacted to confirm that they are still interested in participating in the pilgrimage. Both the OFFICIAL pilgrim list and the WAITING pilgrim list will be updated regularly during the next month.
- During December and January, individuals on the WAITING pilgrim list may contact the Respect Life Office at any time to find out his/her status or to request removal from the list.
- Although no guarantees can be made, last year due to unforeseen circumstances that arose for some pilgrims who were on the OFFICIAL pilgrim list, all individuals on the WAITING pilgrim list were eventually moved to the OFFICIAL pilgrim list and these individuals *were* able to participate fully in the 2018 March for Life Pilgrimage.

NOTE: If you are a parish or school liaison for a group of pilgrims for whom mail-in registration forms are still outstanding, please forward this information to the members of your group and to parents/guardians, if applicable. As additional registrations are received by the Respect Life Office for members of these particular parish and school groups, the information in this email will be provided to these pilgrims as well.

Communication with Youth

NOTE: *Parents, guardians and chaperones of youth participating in the 2019 March for Life Pilgrimage, please understand this trip is a diocesan Respect Life Office-organized event, not a parish or school youth ministry-organized event. Although it will be a very spiritual and Christ-centered pilgrimage, at a minimum, we will talk about abortion, the contributing factors to the scourge of abortion and the extensive damage that abortion causes for both our families and our society. Furthermore, there will be approximately 500,000 people in Washington D.C. also talking about these topics.*

Secondly, although it is the firm position of the Respect Life Office that the public use of graphic images of aborted children is inappropriate, there will most certainly be such images displayed by some organizations during the March for Life. For these reasons, it is critical that all pilgrims are appropriately prepared for the experience. If you feel any youth who is currently signed up should not participate, please prayerfully consider making that call now. If you have specific questions or concerns, you may contact the Respect Life Office at francis@diocesekcsj.org or 816.714.2367 at any time.

Prior to the trip, no adult from either the Respect Life Office or the March for Life Pilgrimage leadership team will contact a youth without also including a parent, guardian, or appropriate adult chaperone except in those cases where the contact information for the parent, guardian, or appropriate adult chaperone is incorrect or unavailable. If an attempt to obtain accurate contact information for a parent, guardian, or appropriate adult chaperone is unsuccessful, communication with the youth will be immediately suspended until the appropriate contact information can be obtained.

However, for the duration of the trip, Jan. 17-19, per the diocesan [Policy for Use of Social Networks, Electronic and Online Communications by Diocesan Employees and Volunteers](#), and the specific authorization provided for each youth within the [Youth Parental Consent and Medical Release Form](#) included with his/her registration, members of the pilgrimage leadership team and adult chaperones of parish/school youth groups will have the ability to contact youth directly, but only if necessary.

Upon completion of the pilgrimage, all members of the pilgrimage leadership team will be required to delete or to appropriately dispose of all contact information for any youth for whom information was retained during the trip.

If, at any time, you believe any of the requirements or policies above have been violated, you are encouraged to immediately contact the Diocesan Respect Life Office or the Diocesan Office of Child and Youth Protection, directly.

Communication with All Pilgrims

Targeted group emails will be sent for the most common requests (e.g. all pilgrims who have registered but who not yet paid, all pilgrims for whom emergency contact information is still needed, etc.). Therefore, an individual pilgrim may receive more than one targeted group email depending on his or her overall registration and payment status. Although less personal, this approach is much more efficient than trying to draft a personalized email for each pilgrim based on his or her individual registration and payment status. This will also allow us the time needed to truly focus on the unique needs of those pilgrims who may not otherwise be able to participate.

As the time of departure draws near, and after the most critical and most common concerns have been addressed, the Respect Life Office will begin contacting pilgrims individually if necessary. However, please feel free to contact the Respect Life Office at any time if you believe you have a need that requires special consideration.

Overview of the 2019 March for Life Pilgrimage (to date)

Pilgrim Facts

- 92 pilgrims
- For the 13th consecutive year, over 50% of our pilgrims are in middle school or high school. ***This fact, and the hope it provides of one day ending abortion, should give a little relief from the redemptive suffering the rest of us will experience on this trip!***
- Ages range from 12 – 75 years young
- We will have four priests joining us this year!

Pilgrims from these local parishes and churches will be joining us for the trip:

- Cathedral of St. Joseph, St. Joseph
- Church of the Annunciation, Kearney
- Church of the Good Shepherd, Smithville
- Church of the Santa Fe, Buckner
- Coronation of Our Lady, Grandview
- Lady of Guadalupe, St. Joseph
- Our Lady of Lourdes, Raytown
- Ravenwood Christian Church, Ravenwood
- Sisters of St. Francis of the Holy Eucharist, Independence
- St. Andrew the Apostle, Gladstone
- St. Bernadette, Kansas City
- St. Bridget, Pleasant Hill
- St. Columba, Conception Junction
- St. Gabriel the Archangel, Gladstone
- St. John Francis Regis, Kansas City
- St. Patrick, Forest City
- St. Patrick, Kansas City
- St. Rose of Lima, Savannah
- St. Therese, Parkville
- St. Thomas More, Kansas City

General Itinerary (Details will be shared in the final pilgrimage communication in January)

Thursday, Jan. 17, 2019

- **Since we will not be staying in a hotel the night before the March and weekday morning rush hour traffic in Washington DC is always an uncertainty, adjustments have been made to the departure times, locations and activities from previous years.**
 - We need to arrive in time to attend the Youth Rally & Mass at the Capital One Center (doors open 6:15-7:15 a.m.)
 - More importantly, in order to meet DOT regulations and for our own safety and peace of mind, we need to ensure the drivers have at least 10 hours between parking the buses in Washington DC and returning to pick us up at Union Station after the March for Life.
- **Therefore, our departure Masses will occur late Wednesday night, January 16, and early Thursday morning, January 17.**
 - Since the group is smaller than in previous years, we have worked with the bus company and with select parishes to host Masses that are most conveniently

located to the churches listed above. This will also facilitate getting us on the road as quickly as possible so everyone will be able to maximize their rest before stopping for breakfast around 7:00 a.m. Thursday.

- **Specific details for Masses, the loading of luggage and departure will be provided in the January email but you will have the option to attend one of the following three departure Masses:**

1. **10:00 p.m., Wednesday, January 16**, at [St. Andrew the Apostle Church, 6415 NE Antioch Rd, Gladstone, MO 64119](#) , followed by youth group activities – *all are welcome!* **(YELLOW Bus will load and depart at 12:45 a.m.)**
2. **12:00 a.m., Thursday, January 17**, at [Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, 4503 Frederick Ave, St Joseph, MO 64506](#) **(RED Bus will load and depart at 12:45 a.m.)**
3. **12:00 a.m., Thursday, January 17**, at [St. John Francis Regis Church, 8941 James A Reed Rd, Kansas City, MO 64138](#) **(Both YELLOW and RED Buses will load and depart at 2:15 a.m.)**

NOTE: Mass attendance at one of these three locations *is not* mandatory; however, all pilgrims must depart from one of these three locations. Parishes are welcome to celebrate their own Mass any time prior to departure and pilgrims are welcome to arrive at one of the three parishes above for departure only.

Bus assignments have been made for all pilgrims currently signed up and are based either on the parish or school of each pilgrim or on special requests that have been received. The final assignments will be communicated once a final pilgrim list is available.

Friday, Jan. 18, 2019

- Arrive in Washington DC
- Youth Rally & Mass at Capital One Center / Mass at St. Mary Mother of God Catholic Church
- Rally on the National Mall
- March for Life
- Depart from Union Station

Saturday, Jan. 19, 2019

- Arrive in Kansas City, Gladstone & St. Joseph

Buses & Travel

- Each bus has 56 passenger seats. After accounting for extra seats required for on-board leadership supplies and at least one extra seat per priest for confessions and for visiting with pilgrims, each bus will have up to 50 pilgrims.
- As a result of the adjustments to departure activities listed above, there will no longer be a need for any pilgrims to change buses once the entire group is together in K.C. on Thursday morning.
- One-way trip is approximately 1100 miles (24 hours). We will be stopping approximately every 3 hours, rotating meal stops and rest stops.
- Meal stops will include a variety of options (fast-food, sit-down, etc.)
- Buses will have a restroom on-board but we will need to be reasonable and considerate of others in our use of the on-board restrooms so please plan accordingly.
- There will be electrical ports near every seat on the buses in order to charge cell phones and small electronic devices.

- All buses will be equipped with Wi-Fi for monitored internet access for personal use and for use during some program activities.
- Food and drink -- Covers on all drinks, please (water bottles, plastic mugs w/lids, etc.). FREE bottled water will be provided on the buses for the duration of the trip. More details to follow regarding food on the buses.
- The good news is there will be plenty of trash bags on the bus; the bad news is there will be plenty of trash bags on the bus, so please be considerate in food choices and in eating habits.
- Luggage space -- There will be limited space on the bus reserved for backpacks and for small personal luggage. There will be room for larger luggage under the bus in the stow-away compartment but please realize we will not have access to these larger bags until we are a couple hours from Washington DC or unless there is something someone absolutely needs that we cannot fit on-board the bus. In general, the only need for larger luggage will be to carry heavier clothes and shoes to wear during the March for Life activities if the forecast calls for cold or precipitation, or if a family or large groups is traveling together and shares a single piece of large luggage.
- Each bus will have a unique and visible marker for ease of identification at stops.
- Most of the time, pilgrims will be traveling in groups. Bus captains and chaperones will be responsible for monitoring the buses and the pilgrims, respectively, but please use common sense and always try to be aware of the location of the buses and of the rest of the group during travel.
- We will stop a couple hours outside of Washington DC at a large truck plaza to freshen up and to change into long johns, sweatshirts, and additional layers if necessary.
- Snacks will be provided for the trip (apples, bananas, chips, water bottles, etc.). **The estimated average daily cost of meals per person for the trip will be \$20** but pilgrims should feel free to bring packaged meals or sack lunches if they like. Coolers and ice chests will *not* be available on-board the buses so please plan accordingly.
- Please contact Teresa at thoepner@diocesekcsj.org or Bill at francis@diocesekcsj.org with questions or concerns regarding meals, meal expenses or any special travel needs you may have..

Leadership Team – Our 2019 March for Life Pilgrimage leadership team is made up of experienced Virtus-certified adults in the following roles:

Bus Captains are responsible for managing the navigation and logistical travel information and for communicating directly while in-route with the bus drivers, with the pilgrims on his or her bus and with each other via cell phone. This will ensure consistent, clear, concise communication on both buses and will ensure the safety of all pilgrims as the bus captains will be the only ones regularly talking with the bus drivers.

Activity Leaders will include Virtus-certified parish youth directors and will be responsible for organizing and facilitating social, spiritual, and educational activities on the buses.

Chaperones

- Parents and guardians will be the primary chaperones for youth with whom they are travelling.
- Parish and school youth leaders will be assigned as chaperones for the members of their respective groups.
- Every unaccompanied pilgrim who is 17 years old or younger, or who is 18 years old and in high school, will be assigned an experienced Virtus-certified chaperone.
- Pilgrims will be required to wear name tags at all times, identifying them as members of the Diocese of Kansas City - St. Joseph group. The back of nametags will include

contact information for the respective bus captain and for other members of the leadership team as appropriate.

- All chaperone assignments will be documented and distributed. We will provide each chaperone with a set of written instructions and contact information, including cell phone numbers for every member of the leadership team and contact information for local emergency services in Washington DC.
- While in-route, each chaperone will be responsible for his or her assigned group of youth during unloading and loading for meals and rest stops. Along with the bus captain, who will be responsible for tracking all of the pilgrims on his or her respective bus, this provides a source of redundant checking at every stop.
- While in Washington DC, pilgrimage leaders will be assigned to specific events and activities. This will be done to ensure that there are at least two adults monitoring every youth – the chaperone and the pilgrimage leader.
- Finally, during the March for Life, all pilgrims will be required to wear an official March for Life Pilgrimage stocking cap that is colorful and fun, but also easily recognizable so we can quickly and easily pick people from our group out of the crowd.

Pilgrimage Program

- Each pilgrim will receive a program booklet that contains educational, spiritual, and social pro-life activities and information.
- Age-appropriate pro-life-themed movies will also be part of the activities.

Thursday, Jan. 17, 2019

Vigil for Life Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

Although we will not be participating in person in the Vigil for Life Mass at the Basilica, EWTN streams this event on-line so it should be viewable from the buses. The 2019 Prayer Vigil for Life is actually a series of events that are held throughout the night so if we arrive into Washington DC early enough Friday morning, we may stop at the Basilica for a brief tour.

Friday, Jan. 18, 2019

Youth Rally and Mass for Life at the Capital One Center (formerly the Verizon Center)

For the 26th year, the Archdiocese of Washington DC will host this event and we have enough tickets for everyone who is interested to attend. Details will be included in the January email.

Friday Morning Mass at St. Mary Mother of God Catholic Church (for pilgrims not attending the Youth Rally & Mass)

The parish is located a couple blocks from the Capital One Center and graciously adds Masses to their regular weekday schedule the morning of the March for Life. Once we know the times of the additional Masses, we will let the parish know we will be in attendance in order to allow our priests to concelebrate if possible.

Pro-Life Rally

There will be a pro-life rally on the National Mall between the Washington Monument and the U.S. Capitol Building immediately before the March for Life.

10:00 a.m. Ben Shapiro Live Podcast

11:00 a.m. Musical opening with Sidewalk Prophets
12:00 p.m. Rally Program

Pilgrims from each Mass group will walk together to the National Mall a few blocks away. We have been contacted by others within our diocese who will be making the trip on their own but who would like to be a part of the larger diocesan group during the March activities. **Absolutely let everyone who is going to the March know that they can call or text you to join up with our group.**

2019 March for Life

Individual pro-life signs will be available if pilgrims are interested but pilgrims may also make their own signs. All signs will need to be approved by the Diocese Respect Life Office before the March for Life. As long as pilgrims are mindful that they are representing the diocese and our Catholic faith, all signs should be OK. We may also have a large 3'x10' banner with additional locator signs strategically placed so pilgrims will be able to easily tell where our group is at all times.

1:00 p.m. March for Life will travel up Constitution Avenue to Supreme Court and Capitol Building

The March itself is a walk totaling approximately one mile in distance but pilgrims will potentially be outside standing, walking, and on their feet in the cold for most of the day so please plan accordingly.

Dinner at Union Station / Departure

Immediately following the March, the diocesan group will walk to Union Station a couple blocks north of the U.S. Supreme Court, arriving between 3:00-4:00 p.m. Everyone will have plenty of time to eat, shop and relax before loading the buses at approximately 6:00 p.m. to return home.

In addition to sending a final email to the group in January, details will be posted to the [March for Life Pilgrimage Website](#) during the next month so pilgrims will always have access to the latest information. However, for questions or concerns prior to receiving the January pre-trip email, please feel free to contact a member of the Respect Life Office or the pilgrimage leadership team.

Have a blessed and safe Christmas, and congratulations again for deciding to be a part of the 2019 March for Life Pilgrimage!

In Christ,

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