

**Diocesan March for Life Pilgrimage 2018
January 18 - 19, 2018**

Last Update: November 9, 2017

This communication contains initial information concerning the Diocesan March for Life Pilgrimage for 2018. Please read all the information contained in this communication to ensure you have a full understanding of the event.

What is the Diocesan March for Life Pilgrimage?

The Office for Evangelization sponsors an annual Diocesan-wide delegation to the annual March for Life in Washington, DC. The March for Life marks the anniversary of the landmark decision of the Supreme Court in Roe versus Wade which makes abortion legal in the United States.

Who should attend the Diocesan March for Life Pilgrimage?

The delegation is primarily intended for middle and high school youth, campus ministry students, and young adults. Youth under the age of 11 will not be permitted to travel with the Diocesan delegation without expressed permission from the Director for the Office for Evangelization.

Because the Diocese has only been allotted 500 tickets this year, parishes and schools are required to stay as consistent as possible with the 1 adult per 8 youth ratio. Adult chaperones may be placed on a waitlist to ensure as many youth/young adults can attend as possible.

Where is the Diocesan March for Life Pilgrimage and what is the schedule?

Thursday, January 18, 2018

- Diocesan sponsored buses will depart in the afternoon from Virginia Beach/Norfolk, Hampton Roads, Richmond, and Roanoke areas for Northern Virginia.
- All buses will be scheduled to arrive in Woodbridge, VA by 7:00 pm at the EagleBank Arena (formerly the Patriot Center) on the campus of George Mason University for the "Life is VERY Good" evening of prayer.
- At the conclusion of the rally, all participants will travel via bus to a near-by hotel for lodging for the evening.

Friday, January 19, 2018

- All buses will be scheduled to arrive in Fairfax, VA by 9:00 am at the Patriot Center on the campus of George Mason University for the "Life is VERY Good" youth rally. The rally will also include Mass with our Diocesan Administrator (or Bishop when appointed) and other diocesan bishops at 10:00 am.
- Immediately following the Mass, the delegation will board their bus and travel to the Washington Monument and join the March from the Washington Monument to the Supreme Court.
- At the conclusion of the March for Life, the delegation will board their respective buses and will travel home.

Some highlights this year

- **Diocesan Medical and Liability Forms REQUIRED.** Youth and Adult Chaperone participants will need to complete the appropriate Diocesan March for Life Pilgrimage Medical and Liability Forms. Priests, College Students, and Young Adults will need to provide basic contact information (address, cell phone, email, and birthdate).
- **Included Lunch Option.** This year, a lunch from Chick-Fil-A is included for all participants. There is no option to “opt-out”. Lunches will be delivered to your bus after the Mass at the Patriot Center that can be consumed on the bus or at the March in Washington.
- **Diocesan Weather Insurance!** As with last year, the Diocese is fully insuring the pilgrimage at no additional cost to you. If the Diocese cancels the pilgrimage for a weather-related reason, the parish/school/campus ministry will be fully reimbursed for any fees paid or due for the pilgrimage automatically.
- **We continue to participate in the “Life is VERY Good” program** hosted at the EagleBank Arena (formerly the Patriot Center) on the campus of George Mason University. This event and venue provide the ability for our diocese to have prime and reserved seating for our pilgrimage participants.
- **Tickets to the Youth and Young Adult Rally and Mass are only available** through the Office for Evangelization. Parish, school, and campus ministry groups not opting to join the Diocesan delegation can participate in the March but will be unable to participate in the Evening of Prayer and Youth Rally and Mass without a ticket. **The pilgrimage is a package deal, there is not an option to pick and choose portions to attend.**
- **The cost is reasonable.** Because of a grant from the Respect Life Fund this year, the Diocese has been able to significantly offset the cost of the trip and provide lodging for participants.

What is the registration fee?

- The costs are as follows:
 - Youth Participants (ages 11 to 17): \$50 per participant
 - Adult Chaperones (ages 18 and over, acting as chaperones for youth): \$65 per participant
 - College Students (enrolled in a 4-year college or community college): \$25 per participant
 - Young Adult Participants (ages 18 and over): \$50 per participant
 - Priests: \$30 per participant
- Substitutions: \$15 per substitution
- There is no refund for any cancellations, regardless of the reason for cancellation.

What does the registration fee cover?

The registration fee covers:

- Admission to the “Life is VERY Good” Evening of Prayer (Thursday night, January 18)
- Admission to the “Life is VERY Good” Rally and Mass (Friday, January 19)
- Bus Transportation
- Lodging and a pizza snack on Thursday night, breakfast and lunch on Friday
- Individual participants are responsible for all other meals (including Friday dinner)

What is the transportation situation?

Included with your registration fee is bus transportation to and from the March for Life.

- All buses will depart in the afternoon on **Thursday, January 18, 2018** from a designated location within approximately a one hour drive from your parish and will be scheduled to arrive at the Patriot Center in Fairfax, VA by 7:00 pm.
- After the rally, the buses will drive participants to our diocesan hotel nearby and return participants to the Patriot Center in Fairfax, VA by 9:00 am on **Friday, January 19, 2018**.
- After the morning rally and mass, buses will drive participants to the March for Life in Washington, DC.
- At the conclusion of the March, buses will depart from Washington, DC to return home.

Once all participant counts have been received by the Diocese, then each parish group will be assigned to a particular bus and bus route. This is when the specific pick-up locations and times will be defined. Each bus will have an assigned bus captain who will be responsible for coordinating bus rules, bus snacks, and meal stops, etc. with the parish leaders on their assigned bus. This information will be available by **Friday, January 5, 2018. We ask that all groups be patient as bus routes do take a little time to discern appropriately.**

What is the lodging situation?

Each room at the hotel contains 2 queen-size beds or a king bed with sleeper sofa. Rooms will be assigned 2 adults OR 4 youth (or college students) of the same gender. The Office for Evangelization will combine parishes with odd numbers to maximize the room allocations.

Since these are standard hotels, linens and towels are provided for all participants. It is encouraged for your participants to bring additional sleeping bags if they would prefer to sleep on the floor.

What are the requirements for adult chaperones?

For this event, 1 adult is required for every 8 youth who are participating in the pilgrimage. Each adult chaperone must be in compliance with the Diocesan Safe Environment Policies, which includes completing the following:

- Screening One Volunteer Form (every 5 years)
- VIRTUS training (once)

How do I register and what are the registration deadlines?

To register Youth, Adult Chaperones, and Priest Participants:

All youth must register through their parish youth coordinator OR Catholic school coordinator. The registration process includes three steps:

1. **Medical Form:** Print out and distribute the medical form from www.evangelizerichmond.org. A copy should be maintained by the youth coordinator in case of emergency. **DO NOT SEND THESE TO THE OFFICE FOR EVANGELIZATION.**
2. **Register Participants via the Online Registration System:** If you are a youth coordinator, contact the Office for Evangelization via email (evangelization@richmonddiocese.org) or phone (804-622-5159) to get your username and password for the online registration system. **All registrations must be entered online by Monday, December 18, 2017 at 3:00 pm.**
3. **Send payments to the Office for Evangelization:** All payments should be sent as soon as the participant is registered. When sending in your payment, be sure to include your parish/school name and the list of participants for whom the payment applies. Any unpaid invoices will be sent to the parish in May 2018.

To register Young Adult and College Student Participants, contact the Office for Evangelization at evangelization@richmonddiocese.org.

Where do I go for questions or additional support?

For all questions or support, contact the Office for Evangelization directly via email at evangelization@richmonddiocese.org OR 804-622-5159.