**Office for Evangelization**

**Catholic Diocese of Richmond**

**Diocesan March for Life Youth Pilgrimage 2024**

**January 18-19, 2024**

This communication contains initial information concerning the Diocesan March for Life Youth Pilgrimage for 2024.

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 Youth Pilgrimage?**

The Office for Evangelization is pleased to announce the return of our annual March for Life pilgrimage in Washington, DC! Our office has seen that young people’s hearts are often inspired when they gather in large numbers. The Life is VERY Good Rally and The March for Life are moments of evangelization and prayerful public witness. They serve as a witness that young people are dedicated to standing up for the vulnerable and that they are aware that the pro-life work is not complete.

**Who should attend the Diocesan March for Life Pilgrimage?**

This pilgrimage is open to 8th-12th grade youth. Because the Diocese has a limited number of spots available, 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 can attend as possible.

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

**Thursday, January 18, 2024**

* Diocesan sponsored buses will depart in the afternoon from Virginia Beach/Norfolk, Hampton Roads, and Roanoke areas for Northern Virginia, with some bus routes including a stop in Richmond on their way.
* All buses will be scheduled to arrive in Fairfax, VA by 7:00pm at the EagleBank Arena 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 nearby hotel for lodging and a nighttime snack for the evening.

**Friday, January 19, 2024**

* All buses will be scheduled to arrive in Fairfax, VA by 9:00am at the EagleBank Arena on the campus of George Mason University for the “Life is VERY Good” youth rally. The rally will also include Mass with Bishop Knestout and other diocesan bishops at 10:00am.
* 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.

**Is there a cap on the number of people I can bring?**

We have a total of 4 buses coming: 1 will start in the west and 3 will start in the east, with some buses stopping in Richmond, for a total of 200 spots. Though parishes and schools do not have a cap, it is prudent to register as early as possible, as we do not plan to add more buses or hotel rooms. When you register your youth and adult chaperones, you will select which location (west, central, or east) the participant is coming from. If there are no more spots for your area, you can contact our office at evangelization@richmonddiocese.org to express interest in some spots being reallocated to your area, but there are no guarantees that this will be possible.

Because of the limited number of spots, we do ask that parishes stay as close to the 1:8 adult to youth ratio as possible so as to leave as many spots for youth as possible.

**What is the registration fee?**

The registration fee for youth participants and adult participants is $100/person.

**The last day to register is Monday, December 11, 2023 at 12:00noon.**

**Cancellations & Substitutions**

 Each participant cancellation on or before **December 11 at 12:00noon** $50 Refund

 Each participant cancellation after **December 11 at 12:00noon** No Refund

 Each participant substituted on or before **January 8 at 12noon***\** $25

*\*The last day to request a substitution is Monday, January 8 at 12noon. All substitutions made between December 11 and January 8 must be the same sex as the participant they are replacing.*

**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 snack on Thursday night, breakfast, and lunch on Friday
* Individual participants are responsible for all other meals (including Friday dinner)
* Diocesan Hat

**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 Thursdayfrom a designated location within approximately a one-hour drive from your parish and will be scheduled to arrive at the EagleBank Arena in Fairfax, VA by 7:00pm.
* After the rally, the buses will drive participants to our diocesan hotel nearby and return participants to the EagleBank Arena in Fairfax, VA by 9:00am on Friday.
* 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.

After registration has closed, 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 in early January. **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. Rooms will be assigned 2 adults OR 4 youth of the same sex. 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; rollaway beds will not be available.

**Rooming lists will be due to our office by December 17, 2023.**

**What are the requirements for adult chaperones?**

For this event, 1 adult is required for every 8 youth who are participating in the pilgrimage. *We do ask that parishes stick to this ratio as much as possible, as space is limited on this 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?**

All youth and adults must register through their parish Youth Minister OR Catholic school coordinator. The registration process includes:

1. **Registration Form:** Print out and distribute the registration form from [www.evangelizerichmond.org](http://www.evangelizerichmond.org). A copy should be maintained by the Youth Minister in case of emergency. **DO NOT SEND THESE TO THE OFFICE FOR EVANGELIZATION.**
2. **Register Participants via the Online Registration System:** If you are the parish Youth Minister, contact the Office for Evangelization to get the event-specific password for the online registration system.
3. **Send payments to the Office for Evangelization** *(if you did not pay via credit card on the online registration system)*:Be sure to include your parish/school name along with a list of participants for whom the payment applies. All outstanding registration fees will be invoiced to the parish.

**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.