

**Diocesan March for Life Youth Pilgrimage 2025
January 23-24, 2025**

This communication contains initial information concerning the Diocesan March for Life Youth Pilgrimage for 2025. 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?

Life Fest and the National 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. Pro-life work continues to be important and is not complete, especially now within our state of Virginia. Our hearts, and especially those of teens, are inspired when they gather in large numbers and see how many people want to promote the life and dignity of the human person! The Diocesan March for Life Youth Pilgrimage provides an opportunity for parishes and schools to easily plug into in order to immerse their teens in this practical aspect of our faith.

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 23, 2025

- Diocesan sponsored buses will depart in the afternoon from around the diocese.
- All buses will be scheduled to arrive in Fairfax, VA by 6:30pm at the EagleBank Arena on the campus of George Mason University for the evening piece of the Life Fest rally, including Eucharistic Adoration.
- At the conclusion of the rally, all participants will travel via bus to a nearby hotel for lodging and a night snack.

Friday, January 24, 2025

- All buses will be scheduled to arrive in Fairfax, VA by 8:00am at the EagleBank Arena on the campus of George Mason University for the morning piece of the Life Fest rally, which includes mass with Bishop Burbidge from the Diocese of Arlington, Bishop Knestout from our own diocese, and other diocesan bishops.
- 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.

How do I reserve spots this year?

Group Leaders (typically the parish Youth Minister or Catholic School Teacher) must complete a Commitment Form by **Monday, December 2 at 12noon**. On the form you will identify the number of adult and youth spaces you are committing to filling for the pilgrimage, maintaining the 1:8 ratio. This form can be found at [HERE](#).

- **Each parish is financially responsible for the spaces they reserve, regardless if they are used or not. The Office for Evangelization will purchase tickets for Life is VERY Good on December 2 and there will not be refunds after this point.**
- If parishes wish to add or drop spots, please contact the Office for Evangelization and we will keep a list to see how we can accommodate these requests.

Because of the limited number of spots on any given bus, 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 16, 2024 at 12:00noon.

Cancellations & Substitutions

Each participant cancellation on or before **December 16 at 12:00noon** \$50 Refund

Each participant cancellation after **December 16 at 12:00noon** No Refund

Each participant substituted on or before **January 6 at 12noon*** \$25

**The last day to request a substitution is Monday, January 6 at 12noon. All substitutions made between December 16 and January 6 must be the same sex as the participant they are replacing.*

What does the registration fee cover?

The registration fee covers:

- Admission to Life Fest
- 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)

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 from 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 6:30pm.
- After the rally, the buses will drive participants to our diocesan hotel nearby and return participants to the EagleBank Arena in Fairfax, VA by 8:00am 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 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 and school 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 and schools 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 Thursday, December 19, 2024 at 12noon.

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 groups 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 year)
- VIRTUS training (once)
- VIRTUS refreshment (every 5 years)

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. A copy should be maintained by the Group Leader (typically the parish Youth Minister or Catholic School Teacher) in case of emergency. **DO NOT SEND THESE TO THE OFFICE FOR EVANGELIZATION.**
2. **Register Participants via the Online Registration System:** If you are Group Leader (typically the parish Youth Minister or Catholic School Teacher), 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/school.

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.