



Through the direction and organization of the Respect Life Office of the Archdiocese of Chicago, the cost for each participant was \$275.00. This covered the costs for our bus transportation, hotel, youth rally, and the lunch on the day of the March. We were on our own for other meals and expenses.

Due to the snow storm, our original departure date scheduled for Friday, January 20th was delayed until the next morning. The CRUSH group arrived at St. John's at 3:30 am to travel to St. Lawrence O'Toole Parish in Matteson to load our buses. After travelling all day on Saturday we arrived at our hotel sometime before midnight. While the teens were disappointed that we were unable to pray before the Planned Parenthood Clinic in DC on Saturday morning due to our delay, their hearts were eager to be with other young people to participate as a witness for life in a movement that will make a difference in something they truly believe in.

After an early Sunday morning session with Cardinal George, CRUSH headed out via the metro system to visit the National Holocaust Museum. The teens have no difficulty in drawing the parallels of the Holocaust to what is happening in our own country with the holocaust of the most vulnerable and helpless through abortion. They get it! News reels, interviews, pictures, artifacts, and personal stories provide them the opportunity to see and learn through a personal and deeper level what the Jews endured during Nazi terrorism. They grew in a better understanding through these historically real events that real people were considered worthless. Many of the teens became confused by the horror and expressed their thoughts about how and why people could follow Hitler and allow such evil to occur.

"Why didn't more people speak up to defend the Jews and others who perished during the Holocaust?"

**In Germany they first came for the Communists,
and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist.**

**Then they came for the Jews,
and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew.**

**Then they came for the trade unionists,
and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist.**

**Then they came for the Catholics,
and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant.**

**Then they came for me —
and by that time no one was left to speak up.**

Pastor Martin Niemoller



After dinner at the U.S. Post Office building, we hurried to catch the metro to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception to attend the Opening Mass of the National Prayer Vigil For Life. We were all moved and inspired to see hundreds of Deacons, Priests, Seminarians, everyone young and old come together for this great mission. We prayed for courage and strength to be the voice for those who cannot speak and for the change of hearts for those who do not listen.



The day would not be complete until we paid our respect to Abraham Lincoln at his Memorial.

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."



We arose early Monday morning and checked out of our hotel at 6:30 to load our buses for the Youth Rally and Mass held at the Verizon Center. This event prepared us to go out into the streets and be strong witnesses for Christ in the March for Life!

As we exited the building we were escorted by the police with lights and sirens and were immediately greeted by the Knights of Columbus and other Catholic organizations with encouragement and extra signs to carry. However, we were also greeted by several angry protestors who shouted at the youth with ugly words and gestures. We were prepared for this and it did not distract us from our mission! Young people from all over the country were united and proclaimed their message that "We love babies, yes we do! We love babies, how about you?" and "Right to choose is a lie - Babies don't choose to die!", "Choose Life!", "Our mom chose life, pass it on", "Abortion - Babies don't approve this message!", "There is no such thing as an unwanted baby!", "We are the Pro Life Generation" and "We vote Pro Life First". As adults, we were encouraged and inspired with great hope that one day Roe v. Wade will finally be over turned because of the passion and conviction of our younger generation. We witnessed their refusal to accept the rhetoric of the N.O.W. group and others waiting for the pro life marchers at the steps of the Supreme Court chanting "it's my body, my choice" and other similar and more distasteful remarks and signs. Our young people are smarter, more informed; and science and their Catholic faith backs them up. They are not afraid but they did become upset with confronting the reality of those who support abortion shouting that "it's not a baby until its' born". Thanks to Joe, (a college student in our bus group) who lead us to join him in praying the Rosary, our CRUSH teens were blessed with great peace knowing that God is in control and our Blessed Mother Mary is interceding. We all felt it!

We grabbed dinner at our favorite pizza place and coffee then headed off to load our buses at 7 pm to take us home. Our bus leader held an open "mic session" for everyone to share about their experience during our time in DC. We were not shy, our sharing session went on for 2 hours. It was clear that everyone experienced something powerful and life changing.

The teens have been empowered and will be a witness for life in their families, school and community. They have put their faith into action and are making a difference.



Thank you for your support and your prayers. We continue on.

