



THE DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

Office of Human Life, Family and Bioethics



The Soul of the Country is on the Line

By Fr Stephen Rooney, Notre Dame NHP

This past January, on the 50th anniversary of the fatal Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision, we as a nation went on pilgrimage to Washington D.C. to participate in the first post-Roe March for Life. There were many of us who questioned why go to Washington if Roe has been overturned? Is abortion now out of the hands of the federal government? Should we now focus on the state level? Many have answered this question in different ways, people of whom are far more educated than I in both politics and in law. However, I believed it was important to still go on pilgrimage to Washington D.C. for the March for Life because the soul of the country is on the line. If this is the case, I believe the place we must go to unite together as a nation is at the heart of our nation, at our nation's capital.



Due to Martin Luther King Day always falling days before the March for Life, King is often on my heart while on this annual pilgrimage. Let us recall when King gave his famous speech which has become known as his *I have a Dream Speech* at the Lincoln Memorial, King was not going to Washington to have a particular federal law changed. Rather, we as a nation in 1963 went on pilgrimage to the heart of our nation because the soul of our nation was on the line. While we have made great strides in our fight against racism, the soul of our nation is still on the line.

When we as a nation pin mother against child and call that choice, what real choice is there? The soul of our nation needs conversion. Some will say, our country, our people are too divided to even have a rational conversation on abortion. Others will say, let us take small steps, let us focus our efforts on making it illegal to have an abortion in the third trimester and then go from there.



Fr Rooney Offering Mass Before the March for Life

My sisters and brothers, this is the argument of gradualism, I personally cannot get on board the train of gradualism. Others will argue, this train, while it makes many stops, its final destination is the end of all abortion. While this argument may be sufficient for those involved in politics, for me, for the Church, I

believe this is not enough. Until we make it absolutely unthinkable for a mother to end the life of her unborn baby, we as a Church will have not done enough. Until we care for every need of a mother with an unexpected pregnancy we will have not done enough. Some will say to care for

every need is impossible. My sisters and brothers, nothing is impossible with God. He is on our side. He will give us the grace to provide for our sisters in need. We, though, must ask Him for the grace to open our eyes, open our hearts to our sisters in need. Because this is not just a political issue, this is a Christian issue. If we see our sister in need, but choose to ignore her, claiming I do not know her or I am too busy, we are in fact, looking upon the face of Christ and saying, I do not know you, I am too busy for you.

Today, I want to propose one solution, one simple step to take. Become a saint. Our nation needs conversion. In the history of the Church, whenever countries fell into the great darkness of sin, God rose up saints from those countries to become lights. These lights, these individuals were efficacious. Their light, rather the light of Christ that they shined, inspired others to become lights. My sisters and brothers, I believe this is the answer. This Lent, let us participate in the working of grace. Our Lord is calling you to become a saint! Participate in the grace God desires to bestow upon you. This is not only for your soul, it is for the soul of our nation. If we accept the graces God is bestowing on us we will become saints and win back the soul of our nation.