

# Catholics in the Archdiocese of Baltimore to march for life

**By Elizabeth Lowe**

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Deacon Richard “Monti” Montalto began debating abortion more than 50 years ago, as a 21-year-old student at Boston College.

“This was before Roe v. Wade,” said Deacon Montalto, who serves at St. Thomas Aquinas in Hampden. “Ours was more of a philosophical, theological argument.”

Deacon Montalto continues to speak out against abortion, as will the hundreds of thousands who are anticipated at the annual National March for Life, Jan. 22 on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

This year’s rally marks 41 years since the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in all 50 states.

The first march in 1974 reportedly attracted 20,000 pro-life advocates. The event, which draws people of all ages, has grown over time and unofficial estimates had the 2011 and 2012 marches at more than 400,000 people.

“To be pro-life is to be passionate about life,” said Deacon Montalto, who attended his first march in 1978.

Hundreds of Catholics from more than two dozen parishes in the Archdiocese of Baltimore are expected to travel to the march, including Carroll Pupa.

The 73-year-old parishioner of St. Michael the Archangel in Overlea got involved with the national march to overturn the Roe v. Wade decision four years ago.

“The Lord will answer us one day,” he said.

Deacon James DeCapite, who ministers at St. Margaret in Bel Air, said pro-life supporters must continue to protest abortion.

“It’s a matter of standing up with people and walking to the (U.S.) Supreme Court (building) and making our statement in this country,” Deacon DeCapite said. “The people who are involved, like ourselves and others, they still believe this is an important issue we can never back off of.”

Kathleen Sangmeister, 74, a St. Margaret parishioner who coordinates church members’ attendance at the march, said her reason for being involved with pro-life activities is personal. When Sangmeister’s daughter-in-law was pregnant, it was recommended she terminate the pregnancy. Today, Sangmeister is the grandmother of a healthy 14-year-old girl.

“It was a clear sign of God’s miracle and God’s grace,” she said. “We need to

recognize the sanctity of life from natural conception to natural death. We do have to stand up because they are babies who are being destroyed.”

Dolores Gebus, a parishioner of St. Joseph on Carrollton Manor in Buckeystown, got involved with the march several years ago.

“If we can get people understanding the humanity of the unborn child, something so innocent, I think it will unlock the gates of the human heart,” said Gebus, 65.

In Maryland, a statewide March for Life is scheduled for March 10 in Annapolis.

Deacon Montalto will offer benediction and Eucharistic adoration Jan. 22 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas, 1008 W. 37th St., Hampden for those who cannot attend the march.

*To find a bus ride to the March for Life, check the bus list and contacts here.*

*Also see:*

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