

Following the Cross

Daniel wasn't sure he wanted to leave the house this morning, especially since his father and big brother were home. But when he heard that Mama was going "downtown," I couldn't get his shoes on fast enough. Daniel loves all the vehicles and the energy of the city.

It was our 2-year-old's first time - and mine too - participating in the Good Friday Way of the Cross (run by the Archdiocese's Baltimore Respect Life Office), so we weren't sure what to expect. We began our journey with dozens of others in the exquisite St. Alphonsus, where the statues were draped in Lenten purple and the tabernacle stood empty, awaiting Easter.



As a group of many cultures and generations - but one faith - we walked from the church, following Cardinal Edwin F. O'Brien along Saratoga Street to Howard Street, genuflecting each time we murmured "Because, by your holy cross You have redeemed the world."



We walked, pausing for each station, until we reached our destination - Planned Parenthood. There we stood or knelt on the opposite side of the street, praying the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary together.



Even at that early hour, before 9 a.m., couples were entering Planned Parenthood, silently carrying their own unseen crosses.



As we prayed, I couldn't help noticing the Planned Parenthood window display, filled

with large photos of smiling faces and the phrase “Every child a wanted child” printed in large letters. Those words are packed with meaning, and they reminded me of why I have felt even more drawn to the pro-life movement since becoming a mother.

I, too, believe every child should be a wanted child, but I believe every child is already wanted, planned, and created by God, regardless of whether the child’s parents were hoping to conceive. As my younger son sat playing with a strand of plastic rosary beads this morning, I thought of how blessed my husband and I are that two women on the other side of the world chose life for the children who became our sons through the miracle of adoption. I don’t believe God gave our boys life so that they would join our family, but I absolutely believe he had a hand in bringing them to us. They fit so beautifully into our family and have enriched our lives immeasurably. I hope and pray that we are enriching theirs, too.



There were several other children at the family-friendly prayer vigil, and Daniel was obviously welcome and included. Even through the few words we exchanged with the other people, the sense of community, of hope, of love for our God, for our faith, and for children, came through.



To Daniel’s delight, during our time downtown, he got to see some vehicles. Standing on Howard Street, just yards from the Light Rail tracks, we watched train after train pass. Each time our excited toddler shouted “Dain!” He wasn’t up to saying the prayers yet, of course – he first heard English just seven months ago – but he enjoyed finding pictures of Jesus carrying his cross inside the Way of the Cross booklet. And our bird lover was overjoyed when he saw a well-fed starling hopping by the curb.

Daniel was especially enthusiastic about the large black cross, which we first saw in the church and then followed as we prayed the Stations of the Cross. By the time we returned to the church, meditating as we said the Divine Mercy Chaplet along the way, Daniel seemed to consider the cross a sort of friend. When it slipped out of

view, he would stretch his neck to try to see it. “Coss, way ah you?” he asked in one of the longest sentences he has said.

He was so concerned that his grandmother lifted him up so he could see that the cross was on the steps in front of the altar. He was smiling when she sat him back in the pew.

Yes, during our first Holy Week as a family of four, I think Daniel and I may have found a new Good Friday tradition. Next year we’ll have to bring the whole family.

