

# Hundreds converge on Annapolis in Maryland March for Life; assisted suicide addressed

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ANNAPOLIS – “Would you like to have a nice Christmas gift?”

The pregnant teenager had just left the big city for a tiny village. She had set up an appointment for an illegal abortion – it was Colombia – but when the day arrived, decided not to go through with it.

In the village, she met a couple who had endured four miscarriages.

“They accepted this offer,” said Father Carlos Osorio, delivering the homily at a Mass celebrated at St. Mary in Annapolis to kick off the Maryland March for Life March 7.

“Because a woman took the right decision and decided she didn’t want to be a criminal, this guy is talking to you today, telling you about hope,” said Father Osorio, who was 5 years old when he learned about his adoption.

Father Osorio was ordained a priest of the Archdiocese of Baltimore in 2015 and serves as associate pastor of St. Joseph in Cockeysville.

The congregation, which filled the standing room at the rear and sides of the church as well as the pews, exploded in applause.



*Father Carlos Osorio, associate pastor of St. Joseph in Cockeysville, delivers the homily at a Mass celebrated at St. Mary in Annapolis to kick off the Maryland March for Life March 7. (Kit Cross/Special to the Review)*

The Mass was concelebrated by Father Osorio; Bishop Mario Eduardo Dorsonville-Rodríguez, auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Washington; Redemptorist Father Robert Wojtek; Monsignor Adam J. Parker; Monsignor James P. Farmer; and clergy from the Washington Archdiocese.

The crowd that marched to Lawyers Mall, in front of the Maryland State House, included about 1,200, according to the rough count of one marshal. In addition to the pre-march Mass, some marchers attended a non-denominational worship service at St. Mary's High School, adjacent to the church.

First-time marchers Tom and Eva Haine, parishioners of St. Mary, were involved with the pro-life cause while students at Princeton University.

"I think it's the civil rights issue of our time," Tom Haine said, adding that advocating for the pro-life cause was an opportunity to stand up for "the ultimate little guy."



*As the sun sets, a few marchers held lit candles to illumine the 2016 March for Life in Annapolis. (Kit Cross/Special to the Review)*

Laura Jones, a parishioner of Holy Family in Davidsonville, expressed sorrow for all those who have been aborted.

"There's all this talent, all these friends and all this family that we'll never know," she said. "I feel like the world is full of so many great people, and if it loses even one of them, we're hurting."

Christine Hintz, a longtime pro-life activist and another parishioner of Holy Family, marveled at the current unity in the pro-life movement.

"It was so fractured, but it's not now," she said. "Maybe it's Pope Francis - I don't know."

She added that seeing people like Ramona Trevino - a former manager of a Planned Parenthood facility in Sherman, Texas - leaving their jobs in the industry to join the pro-life cause gives her hope.

"I like to say that God writes straight, in crooked lines," Hintz said.

Trevino, a featured speaker at the rally, said that there were many factors that led to her conversion, but the "straw that broke the camel's back" came after a 2011 exposé by Lila Rose of Live Action that "showed Planned Parenthood aiding and abetting sex trafficking across the country," she said.

At a meeting of Planned Parenthood staff, Trevino expected that they would be briefed on how to recognize signs of abuse so that it could be reported and dealt with.

She was shocked, she said, when a higher-up told her, "Ramona, we're not here to talk about that. We're here to talk about how to recognize when you're being trapped and recorded."

"At that point, I realized that everything I had been hearing about the organization was true," Trevino remembered.

Also offering memorable words – delivered in the dignified drawl of his native South Carolina – was Wayne Cockfield, a wheelchair user since he was severely wounded in Vietnam as a sergeant in the Marine Corps.

Cockfield spoke against physician-assisted suicide, which proponents have been pushing across the country in recent years. A Maryland bill was withdrawn just days before the Maryland March for Life, but Cockfield and others believe that proponents will return.

"These people aren't going to give up," he said. "This fight has to be fought over and over and over again."

Cockfield remembered an experience he had as a 15-year-old, seeing a severely disable man.

"I said I would rather be dead than live like him," he said. "But you know what? I am now like him. It looks a lot different from the inside than from the outside."

Cockfield found irony in a society that promotes assisted suicide, noting that a teenager who expressed a desire to end his life would get "suicide prevention

counseling.”

“They would give me, the veteran, suicide assistance counseling,” Cockfield said.

He didn’t see a long stretch from current laws and proposals to assisted suicide being made available to the disabled. He envisioned himself asking a doctor for the lethal drugs.

“They’d say, ‘Of course, who wants to live like you? You’re in a wheelchair,’” Cockfield said. “Here – let me help you. Take this poison. I’m compassionate.”

He noted that the word “compassion” comes from a Latin root meaning “suffering with.”

“Medical abandonment is not compassion,” he said.

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