

Maryland March for Life is March 9

Hundreds of Marylanders will gather in Annapolis March 9 to rally in support of pregnant women at the 30th annual Maryland March for Life.

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien will celebrate a 5:30 p.m. Mass at St. Mary in Annapolis at the same time Rev. Earl Mason, pastor of Grace United Methodist Church in Upperco, will lead a prayer service in the auditorium of St. Mary's High School in Annapolis.

Participants will then walk from St. Mary's to Lawyer's Mall, where leading pro-life speakers and legislators will talk.

Passing laws that give women the option of looking at sonograms before having an abortion will be a major theme of this year's march.

The Senate Finance Committee voted down a measure Feb. 20 that would have required abortion clinics within Anne Arundel County to provide the option of seeing sonograms prior to abortions. Only Sen. Barry Glassman, a Republican representing Harford County, and Sen. E.J. Pipkin, a Republican from the Eastern Shore, supported the measure on a 9-2 vote.

"Women deserve informed consent," said Deacon Richard W. "Monti" Montalto, co-chair of the Maryland March for Life and a deacon at St. Thomas Aquinas in Hampden.

"People who have sonogram machines and use them in the crisis pregnancy centers tell me that the women who see the sonogram will choose not to have an abortion in 85 percent of the cases," Deacon Montalto said. "If they're accompanied by their husband or boyfriend, the number increases beyond that."

Nancy Paltell, associate director for the prolife office of the Maryland Catholic Conference and a keynote speaker at the march, noted that many women who undergo abortions suffer psychological trauma. Bills like the one being promoted at the Maryland March for Life are modest efforts to help pregnant women, she said.

“Six months after they have an abortion, women may see a program on the Discovery Channel about life in the womb or read about it in some magazine and then wonder, ‘what have I done?’” Ms. Paltell said. “They could go into a deep depression.”

Seeing a sonogram would empower women to make an informed choice and spare them potential post-abortive trauma, Ms. Paltell said.

Deacon Montalto expects this year’s march to be one of the largest of recent years thanks in part to a fleet of buses that will depart for the event from six locations throughout the state. More than 400 people are anticipated at the march, he said.

“It’s important that the legislators know that the life issues are really important to us and we have to make ourselves known to them and hold them accountable,” he said.

Maryland March for Life Schedule

Annapolis

5 p.m. – Registration

5:30 p.m. – Mass at St. Mary Church and prayer service at St. Mary’s High School, 109 Duke of Gloucester St.

6:40 p.m. – March to Lawyers Mall departs St. Mary’s

7 p.m. – Rally at Lawyer’s Mall

8 p.m. – Refreshments at St. Mary’s High School

For bus listing or more information, visit www.marylandmarchforlife.org or call 410-269-6397