

St. Mary's students celebrate Life Week

Ginny Dauses walked out of her St. Mary's High School office Jan. 7 when the bell rang for 9 a.m. classes.

"It's about to get a little crazy," she promised.

Sure enough, as Ms. Dauses made her way down a hallway filled with pro-life literature, students of all ages tried to engage her when they crossed paths. There was little doubt that the campus minister was driving the course of conversations inside classrooms and hallways of the Annapolis school during the week.

"Are we going to talk about abortion today?" one female student asked.

Ms. Dauses answered with a spirited "Yep!" and continued toward a lecture from a local law student.

Students were in the middle of Life Week, an immersive five-day campaign that aimed to raise the consciousness of students and prepare many of them for their participation in the Jan. 22 March for Life in Washington, D.C.

The school will send four busloads of students to the march. Students who remain will discuss life issues in class. During that time, they hope to send a message to the country's political and judicial leaders that life, in all its forms, must be protected.

The brainchild of Ms. Dauses, Life Week featured a variety of speakers, including law students, activists and even women who had abortions. Ms. Dauses hoped students would be stirred emotionally and mentally with information that could help them change the world around them.

"The true definition of rebellion is Christianity and Christ," Ms. Dauses said. "If you're going to be Christian, you're going to rebel. I want them to know about the Maryland statistics (for abortion) and what's going on in their own state and happening in their own country."

About 70 students crammed into two classrooms Jan. 7 for a presentation by local student and pro-life advocate Cathy McLeod. Ms. McLeod skillfully dissected abortion rights arguments in an effort to arm and inform the next generation of potential Roman Catholic voters.

She also presented some often graphic details of abortions. Students said frank talks can shake people out of apathy and the March For Life can speak for the defenseless.

"It's really overwhelming to be there and see people feel the way you do," senior Katie Muldoon said.

At the conclusion of the lecture, one female student walked up to Ms. Dausen and confided that her neighbor and friend had an abortion just a day before. The student asked Ms. Dausen if she could join her in prayer for her friend.

Ms. Dausen said the campus ministry organization, known as "The Real World Club," is a place of comfort and honesty.

"I think a kid knows I'm not here to judge them," she said. "We're just here to have a dialogue. I respect them and what they question."

Principal Richard Bayhan said the week's events were vital in the overall mission of the school.

"Life is important and central for all Catholics and Christians," Mr. Bayhan said. "But, our society around us doesn't always share that. The kids hear that, and we want to make sure, unabashedly and with no hesitation, the kids get the faith view of this - which is life is a critically wonderful gift from God."