

The pro-life generation

January 22. It may be just another day for many Americans, but for Catholics and others who value the sanctity of life, it is a once-a-year chance to come together in great numbers and call for an end to legalized abortion and the movement toward a culture of life.

An estimated 300,000 people participated in the March for Life in Washington, D.C., to memorialize the 37th anniversary of the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion in our country.

It came as little surprise to many that President Obama did not address those in attendance, given that he chose the day after the March last year to rescind a decades-old policy to allow federal funds for overseas abortions in one of his first acts as President.

But it was not his absence that explains the dearth of coverage of the March by the secular press. They are simply ignoring the growth of the pro-life movement because it does not match their plans of where their secular creed should be taking us. Indeed, some recent polls tell us that 56 percent of Americans now consider abortion immoral; if you relied on the secular media for coverage of the March you might have been left wondering whether it even occurred!

How grateful we should be, therefore, to the Catholic press for their efforts to keep Catholics informed of pro-life, grassroots efforts like the March for Life. Our own Catholic Review was well represented, as Associate Publisher/Editor Chris Gunty, with typical initiative, offered photos and reports throughout the day via Twitter and the paper's Web site.

There was even a "virtual March" created by Americans United for Life, which allowed the countless people who couldn't be there to "march" in virtual spirit.

Without their efforts, the quarter-million people giving voice to the voiceless might go unnoticed, and those we elect to represent the values we hold most dear would be held unaccountable.

It was precisely accountability that motivated a relatively small group of 30 individuals to organize the first March for Life. With an understanding of the magnitude of the Supreme Court's decision and a desire to prevent a culture of death from pervading American society, the March for Life was born after only three months of planning. To the happy surprise of those who labored to create what has become a seminal day each year for those who have embraced the pro-life "movement," an estimated 20,000 people showed up for that first March on Jan. 22, 1974.

Since then, the March for Life has emerged into a multi-day advocacy event and celebration of life.

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