



A half-million people, including thousands from high schools and colleges, participated Jan. 22, 2015, in the 41<sup>st</sup> annual March for Life on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Fifteen were Assumption College students, who rallied in support of the protection of human life at all stages.

“There has been a new wave of support for the pro-life movement in the past few years,” said senior Julia Gilberto, president of Assumption’s Advocates for Life student organization, which co-sponsored the bus trip to the nation’s capital with the College’s Office of Campus Ministry. “This support is because people have realized that the pro-life movement is a direct response to a genuine concern for the well-being of every human being.

“We try to stress at our meetings that *Roe v. Wade* has not only left the unborn voiceless, but women as well,” added Gilberto. “There are numerous testimonies from women who express that they felt pressured by boyfriends, family members, or abortion clinics to have abortions. These voices need to be heard.”

The first March for Life was held in January 1974 as a small demonstration; it rapidly grew to be the largest pro-life event in the world. The event was launched to commemorate the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision, which legalized abortions.

Assumption students joined a group from the College of the Holy Cross on a pre-dawn bus trip that left Worcester on Jan. 21 for the nation’s capital; their journey began with a prayer service provided by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. The students arrived in Fairfax, Va., that afternoon, where they gathered with several thousand others at George Mason University’s Patriot Center for an evening of prayer that featured music performances, prayer, reflections

and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. On Jan. 22, the Assumption students celebrated Mass and attended a rally for March participants at St. Aloysius Church, before traveling to the National Mall for the actual March. Hundreds of thousands of students from colleges and universities across the country took part in the event.

“This trip made me realize that we are the generation that truly can end abortion,” said Katelin Riley, a first-year student at Assumption. “It was amazing to see so many people come together in our nation’s capital for this cause.”

Shaun Bradley, a senior theology major, has also observed a shift in his generation’s position on life.

“My generation, or at least my exposure to it at Assumption, is more in favor of life but not necessarily pro-life,” he said. “While many seem moderate or indifferent toward abortion, many are very strongly pro-life, and few are strongly pro-choice. I would hesitate to call my generation pro-life, but there is a strong presence in support of the right to life.”

Ralph Cola, a junior history major, attended his fourth March for Life. He began attending the March as a high school student.

“The March is always a powerful event to attend because it reminds me that I do not stand alone in being pro-life,” he said.



This was the second March for Life for Jacqueline Raferty, a junior human services and

rehabilitation studies major.

“Assumption College provides so many opportunities to be involved in a community that speaks out for injustice,” she said. “Often, it can be easy to feel intimidated or belittled for speaking out on these beliefs. Attending this March helped me realize that there are so many other people out there supporting the same cause, and who are working for the greater good.”

Accompanying the students on the trip were Christopher Klofft, Assumption professor of religious studies and AC Advocates for Life moderator; Assumption Campus Ministry Director Paul Covino; Campus Minister Deacon Richard Martino; and Assumptionist postulant Brian Verzella.