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March For Life: An Overview

On April 5, 2016, many students made their way to the US Capitol for Allentown Central Catholic's March for Life. The actual march, which was supposed to occur on January 22, 2016, alongside hundreds of thousands protesting against abortion, was postponed here at Central due to the 30+ inches of snow the Lehigh Valley received around the same time. Many students thought that would be the end to the march, myself included. However, our Chaplain and Director of Campus Ministry, Father Allen Hoffa and the Coordinator of Retreats, Mrs. Mary Ellen Strohl, were committed to create a second opportunity for the students to participate in such a meaningful event. It would be Central's own March for Life, and 260 students would take the journey down to Washington, DC. The morning of the march, we took a four hour bus ride and arrived in DC. After checking in with chaperones to make sure that everyone was accounted for, we sat down on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial and eagerly awaited our itinerary for the day. We would start at the Lincoln Memorial and make our way to the Korean War Memorial, the new Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, and the World War Two Memorial. From there, we would walk to the US Capitol Building and meet up with US Senator Pat Toomey from Pennsylvania. The most memorable moment was the speech Father Hoffa made at the MLK Memorial. Father Hoffa captured the audience with passionate, energized talks that exemplified our faith and ideas on the right to life and dignity of the human person. He spoke about the discrimination experienced by the unborn because of how some people disregard them as life. Father Hoffa also spoke about a quote found at the Memorial site, "Out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope." The mountain exponentially grows as the fear that banning abortion will be left with the past generation; but then, a new hope rises out of the new generation, which includes the Central Catholic family members walking for a better respect for all life. After the Memorial Walk, we made the trek taken on the original March for Life, which passes by the Washington Monument and the National Mall. We arrived at the US Capitol, and Senator Toomey allowed students to lead very interesting discussions on several topics including abortion, gun control, and the death penalty. This opportunity allowed Central Catholic students to learn more about how the government works for the betterment of moral issues facing America today. Finally, students walked over to Union Station for dinner and had a meditative bus ride home. The March for Life, overall, was a very uplifting experience; we take life very seriously and to walk with classmates, as we make a difference, was amazing. The call to end abortion and increase a better respect for the dignity of the human person has just begun for our generation, and it a battle we, at Central Catholic, are willing to fight.