

PRO-LIFE EVENTS: VIRTUAL MARCH, PRAYER SERVICES AT NY ABORTION CLINICS



Although the annual March for Life was not held this year due to the pandemic situation, a number of pro-life events were organized by the Orthodox Church.

Sunday January 24, just two days after the anniversary of the Supreme Court's terrible Roe v. Wade decision in 1973, was celebrated as Sanctity of Life Sunday. In his archpastoral message for the occasion, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon of

Washington and All America and Canada (Orthodox Church in America) reiterated the Church's "commitment to the defense of the defenseless, and the protection of the most vulnerable."

His Beatitude also focused on providing help and serious alternatives to those who are considering having an abortion: "The teaching of the Lord should inspire us to seek out ways to provide necessary support for mothers or families who might otherwise consider having an abortion... To this end, we should extend the right hand of fellowship to these mothers and their families, provide material support when needed, and assist them in caring for the children who will be born of them."

Above all, this means showing mercy, compassion, and love, writes Met. Tikhon.

The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America issued a similar message, saying: "Many times women feel trapped and even forced to make this heart-wrenching decision due to financial hardship, family or communal rejection, or other difficult life circumstances. When the burden is too heavy, we, the Church, must be there to lift the burden and open the door to other, more perfect solutions."

And on Thursday, January 28, Met. Tikhon led a virtual March for Life in place of the usual event in Washington. The event began with a moleben served at St. Vladimir's Seminary, after which the OCA primate offered a reflection in which he called upon all to love mercy as much as justice.

"You and I cannot control the destruction the decision to abort a child causes, as hard as that might be to face. But what we can do is become the people that our family, friends, and neighbors know will love them and help them if they face that situation. We cannot make the decision to keep the baby for them, but we can make it easier for them to make the right choice," His Beatitude said.

The event then continued with addresses from Dr. Ana Iltis, professor and director of the Center for Bioethics, Health and Society at Wake Forest University and professor of philosophy at St. Vladimir's Seminary and Orthodox Christian representatives from three organizations that support women in crisis pregnancies: Emily Wilkinson of Orthodox Christians for Life, Kathy Kovalak from Zoe for Life, and Dr. Chris Humphrey from Vision for Life. His Eminence Archbishop Michael of New York and New York and New Jersey offered a reflection and a closing prayer.

Watch the whole event on the OCA's YouTube channel.

The next day, Orthodox Christians for Life held a prayer service near Planned

Parenthood's abortuary in Manhattan. The participants gathered, despite the cold weather, to pray for an end to abortion and to call all those involved in baby genocide to repentance, the organization reported to OrthoChristian.

The protestors also had a sign informing those considering abortion that free help is available.

Orthodox Christians for Life is a New York-based pro-life advocacy group. Their report notes that the first meeting of volunteers occurred on January 12, and, "thus we can say that our group's birthday is the same as that of Hieromartyr Fr. Daniel Sysoev. We will do everything possible to follow Fr. Daniel's words: 'Our goal is a complete and unconditional legal ban on abortion.'"

To that end, Orthodox Christians for Life will be holding regular prayer services near abortuaries, "to provide education on the issue of abortion and to assist those in crisis pregnancies." The next rally will be held on February 20 in Manhattan.

Watch a short video from the prayer service on Orthodox Christians for Life's Telegram channel. You can also follow the group on Instagram.

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