

Bishop hails cross-country 'pilgrims for life'

By Richard Szczepanowski
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — While other college students and recent graduates spent the summer working or vacationing, one group of 20 brought attention to pro-life views by walking — across the country.

The group, mostly incoming, current or former students of Franciscan University

in Steubenville, Ohio, finished their 90-day, 3,000-mile trek from San Francisco to Washington early Aug. 20.

Celebrating their accomplishment at an early morning Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception was Auxiliary Bishop William E. Lori of Washington. He hailed the group as "pilgrims for life."

"Just being out there walk-

ing and being visible gives people something to think about," said Diego von Stauffenberg, a 25-year-old from Arlington, Va. Von Stauffenberg is president of Crossroads, a Catholic pro-life youth outreach program that sponsored the cross-country walk for the second year.

"We are sacrificing by walking and giving up our summer so that we can talk to people

and tell them that abortion is wrong," he said.

Bishop Lori praised the group's efforts, saying it was in the spirit of Pope John Paul II's call in his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, "to activate a great campaign in support of life."

"You have demonstrated for one and all that life and the value of life is not some pe-

ripheral issue but rather is at the center of the struggle between good and evil, light and darkness," said Bishop Lori.

"At the crossroads of America you have sought to move consciences — to open minds and hearts to the truth — that the unborn are human beings created in the image and likeness of God," he said.

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