

ABORTION

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Americans from obeying the fifth commandment against killing.

"We are here today to say we must obey God rather than man," the bishop said.

DIOCESAN ACTIVISTS

The Mass was the highlight of the day for John Maurer, who co-chairs the Pro-Life Group at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish in Irondequoit with his wife, Mary Jo.

"When it comes right down to it, what makes it all meaningful is that life is a gift from God," Maurer said. "The Mass really elevates the issue from the human to the divine."

Maurer was accompanied on the march by four of his children: John, 15; twins Marielle and Elizabeth, 13; and Annemarie, 11 (see related story on page 8). The children represented the widespread presence at the march of young people, who appeared to be in the slight majority. Maurer said he wanted his children to realize that their parents stood publicly against abortion, and apparently his efforts worked as evidenced by Annemarie's comments.

"If we help, then it will be easier for (people) to stop the killing of the babies," she said.

After the Mass, many pro-life activists visited their congressional representatives to lobby against such practices as partial-birth, or late-term, abortions and cloning. They also lobbied on behalf of measures to protect pro-life health-care workers and hospitals from having to perform abortions. One such lobbying group came from St. Thomas and included John C. Hayes, who ran on the Right to Life and Conservative party lines in the 1996 race for New York State Senate. Hayes noted he ran because there were no pro-life Democrats or Republicans running that year in his district, and he believed the unborn needed a voice on their behalf in the campaign.

"The fact to me is very simple that God creates life ... and it's not up to us to extinguish that life, especially when it's most vulnerable," Hayes said.

The St. Thomas group visited the offices of Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), and were given comment sheets to fill out by Schumer's aides. Schumer himself issued a statement endorsing *Roe v. Wade*.

"The decision to have an abortion will never be an easy one, nor should it be, but I believe that every woman should have the option to make their own decision in counsel with her minister, priest, rabbi, physician and family," he said.

Tens of thousands of activists who disagreed with Schumer marched to



Crosses commemorating the unborn victims of abortion dot the lawn of the Washington Monument where March for Life protesters gathered to hear speakers before the march Jan. 22.

the area around the Washington Monument for a rally featuring a number of speakers, including an orthodox rabbi who "excommunicated" Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut, a 2004 Democratic presidential candidate, from orthodox Judaism because of his pro-choice views.

"God forbid you (Lieberman) become president!," the rabbi shouted to cheers and applause from the crowd. A number of the speakers praised Republican President George W. Bush for pledging to sign bills this year banning partial-birth abortion and human cloning.

One Democrat, Janet Robert of Minnesota, held a banner at the rally touting "Democrats for Life." The group is working to elect pro-life Democrats, she said, and recently elected Carol Crossed, a Catholic consistent life ethic activist from Brighton, as its president (see related story on page 7). The group maintains a Web site at *democratsfor-life.org*, Robert said.

A group of teenagers waved "Rock for Life" signs. While his companions handed out picket signs, one teen posed for photographs, dressed all in black with a Mohawk haircut, his jacket full of safety pins.

"That must be aerodynamic in this wind," a passer-by shouted to him, referring to his hairstyle.

A more conservatively dressed demonstrator held a wordy sign



Sonya Novotny of Cleveland, Ohio, and her daughter, Lauren, sleep in the pews before the beginning of Mass at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., Jan. 22.

blaming the Second Vatican Council for somehow leading to legalized abortion. Among the ills fostered by Vatican II were "women wearing pants," the sign asserted. However, most of the pro-life women at the rally apparently disagreed, as demonstrated by their attire for the cold weather.

Meanwhile, the St. Thomas group watched the rally amid a field of crosses erected by a pro-life youth group called Saving Arrows. The

group was founded in Virginia and has chapters across the nation, according to Rae Powell, mother of the group's founder, Melissa Powell. The crosses represented the average of 200 babies aborted in America each hour, she said.

IN THE STREETS

As the rally ended and the marchers geared up for the walk to the Supreme Court building, a group of Catholics from St. John of

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