



## S.M.A.R.T. NEWS

Saint Mary's Active Religious Teens  
Saint Mary's Parish Iowa City, Iowa February 2017  
Web Site: <http://youth.icstmary.org>



Dear Friends,

Our annual St. Mary's ski trip took place this last Sunday – Super Bowl Sunday. Since I spent time in the lodge waiting for the skiers, I got to watch most of the Super Bowl game. I like football and that was ONE GREAT GAME – and certainly FAR FROM BORING!

I must admit, it would be very easy to be discouraged if you were a Falcon fan or player. And I'm guessing players and fans were saying, "*Why?*" and "*How?*" And then it dawned on me as I was driving home that evening that our God loves the youth skiers, the bus driver, the chaperones, the person selling programs in Houston's stadium, Tom Brady, and Matt Ryan ALL THE SAME. There are no winners and losers in God's mind. Every minute of every day, God says to us, "*I love you and you are mine. Now "go get in the game" and make the most out of your life.*"

So the next time we get disappointed or discouraged or full of despair, let's remember that our Spiritual Coach is never just on the sidelines - He has promised He will support and defend us against all of life's tackles. We are all on an even playing field with Him - we just need to join in the huddle of our Catholic faith and follow His play call...

Patti McTaggart

*"For I know the plans I have for you..." Jeremiah 29:11*



**"CALLING ALL CHEFS!!!"**

**THIS MONTH'S CASSEROLE- MAKING FOR FREE LUNCH  
WILL TAKE PLACE ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16th at 4PM IN  
THE PARISH HALL. BE READY TO "STIR-UP" SOME GREAT  
MEALS FOR THOSE LESS FORTUNATE THAN OURSELVES!**



**FEBRUARY**



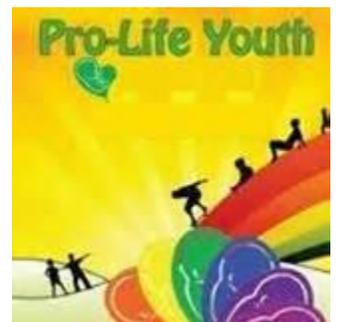
- 2 - FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD
- 3- FEAST OF ST. BLASE - Blessing of throats
- 3- Holy Hour for Vocations - after the 12:10PM Mass in the church
- 12 - CONFIRMATION SESSION 7:00PM IN THE PARISH HALL
- 16 - Free Lunch Casserole-Making 4-5PM in the parish hall
- 19 - Confirmation rehearsal - 7PM in the church
- 26 - SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION - 2PM

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**WANT TO LEARN A LITTLE CHURCH HISTORY?  
THERE'S A WEBSITE CALLED: [FLOCKNOTES.COM/POPE](http://FLOCKNOTES.COM/POPE). IT  
TELLS US ALL ABOUT THE DIFFERENT POPES IN OUR  
CHURCH HISTORY. CHECK OUT THE FLYER ABOUT IT IN THIS  
ADDITION OF THE SMART NEWS!**

**THANK YOU TO THE YOUTH AND ADULTS WHO  
PARTICIPATED IN THE MARCH FOR LIFE ON JAN.  
25<sup>th</sup>-28th IN WASHINGTON, D.C.!  
God is smiling down on you for standing up for  
the life He placed in the womb!!**



**SKI TRIP PHOTOS FROM FEB. 5TH, 2017!**  
**WE HAD A GREAT DAY ON THE SLOPES -**  
**THANKS BE TO GOD!**



# MARCH FOR LIFE



On January 25<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> Johnson County Right to Life and St. Mary's Peace and Justice Commission sponsored three youth and one adult chaperone to participate in the March for Life in Washington, D.C. These young people traveled in charter bus with approximately 35 other pilgrims from across the diocese. Here are photos from their experience:



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BRIEF REFLECTIONS ON THE 2017 MARCH FOR LIFE:

HERE ARE SOME

This year I was given the opportunity to go on the March for Life pilgrimage to Washington D.C. with the Diocese of Davenport for the fourth year in a row. This year I was sponsored by Johnson County Right to Life.

The March for Life is always an amazing experience for me, and offers excellent opportunities for prayer and sacrifice, and this year was no exception!

This year I had the privilege of meeting Abby Johnson, founder of the organization "And Then There Were None" and Senator Joni Ernst who did a "Meet n' Greet" with several groups from Iowa before the march.

Visiting the Holocaust Museum has always been a haunting, painful, and intense, yet powerful experience. It's disturbing thinking about the parallels between the holocaust and abortion. The holocaust was only made possible because of the dehumanization of Jews and others killed during the war and similarly abortion is made possible due to the dehumanization of the child in the womb. I have never left that museum without having been touched by the sorrow and the pain that still lingers there, because in a way it's a reminder of the sorrow and pain that is still being inflicted on the men, women and children by the horrors of abortion.

Going to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception is when the sheer number of people attending starts to hit you, and that's just for the opening Mass, which is always stunning!

Some of us in our group went to the Pre-March rally which was an awesome experience! For the first time in history, a vice-president attended and addressed the marchers and it's just really cool being there at a moment that you know history is going to remember!

There were many other amazing speakers at the rally, and the music was pretty great too! It's just so inspirational, and to be able to share these moments with some of my best friends just made it even better!

It's amazing to see so many different people from different walks of life all marching for the same purpose. This year it especially struck me how inspiring it is that we can all still come together peacefully as individuals and become united as a whole, fighting for a common good, despite all the anger and frustration and tension that has been poisoning America over the last couple of months.

Once you start marching, it's unfortunately easy to forget why you're marching and just focus on not getting separated from your group or pay more attention to your aching feet rather than to the messages on the signs people are carrying. But then something calls you back, like the beautiful sound of the rosary being prayed aloud, or the sight of a boy your age marching on crutches. It makes you think, "Why am I here?"

For me, I'm there to stand up for those who are too weak, or too afraid to stand for themselves; not just for the unborn children, but for their mothers and fathers, for those who work in the abortion clinics and the doctors who perform the abortions.

I'm there to pray for those who maybe don't think they need prayers.

I'm there because I believe that all life has dignity and value, and that everyone deserves a chance to make something of the life God has given them. That's why I march.

Valerie Teets, 16 years old.

**Participating in the March for Life was an absolutely amazing experience!**

The theme was "The Power of One" and I am so grateful for the opportunity to add my voice to something so big, and to do my part in trying to end abortion. Marching through Washington D.C. with so many thousands of people, all with the same purpose, was really special. I hope that I will continue to be able to be a part of it as long as it is held, even as we work and pray for the day when it will not be necessary. In addition to the March itself, we visited the Holocaust museum, met Iowa State Senator Joni Ernst, and heard Vice President Mike Pence speak. I would like to thank Johnson County Right to Life for sponsoring me on this trip and giving me such a great experience!

- Sarah Seele, 17 years old.

It was a last minute, wonderful, and unexpected blessing to be able to go. Traveling with old friends, and meeting new ones was a great experience. At the March, it was awesome to run into other Iowa friends who are currently away at seminary (Connecticut) and colleges (Franciscan in Ohio, Ave Maria in Florida, Benedictine in Kansas).

One of the first things Fr. Jeff tells the group when we begin the 20-hour bus trip is, "This is a pilgrimage, not a vacation." And it's true. He tells us to keep someone (or more than one) in mind to pray for and to offer up any discomfort. The lack of sleep, lack of showers, and lots of walking provide opportunities to grow in many virtues, especially patience with fellow pilgrims and fortitude!

There are so many aspects of the trip that are memorable, such as the Vigil Mass at the National Shrine, and going to the Holocaust Museum, which is very sobering to me as I have also visited Dachau concentration camp in Germany.

Because of the Vice President coming to speak at the Pre-March Rally, we noticed the security was tighter than it has ever been in the past. We heard many encouraging and hopeful speakers. My favorite was a U.S. Congresswoman from Utah named Mia Love. You can listen to her speech

here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iq-8EeEUtA>

Our diocesan group carries a beautiful banner on the March as a way to show that we march for everyone, not only the unborn. It has an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe overlaid with a list of words. The first word "Pro" is followed by the words Life, Baby, Woman, Man, Family, Truth, Healing, Mercy, and Love, one underneath the other. That about says it all!

I am very grateful for all the prayers offered for the success of the Pilgrimage and for the sponsorship of Johnson County Right to Life and St. Mary's Peace and Justice Committee.

I am also thankful for Donna DeJoode and Fr. Jeff for organizing and leading the Pilgrimage.

Bethany Teets, 19 years old



# LIVES OF THE SAINTS

By Jacinta Hamilton, 10<sup>th</sup> Grade,  
Homeschool

**February 11<sup>th</sup> is the Feast Day of St. Bernadette Soubirous.** St. Bernadette was

born in Lourdes, France in 1844 and canonized in 1933. She was the oldest of five surviving children in her family, with many other siblings dying in infancy. At the age of six, she developed chronic respiratory problems, most likely asthma or tuberculosis. God used this trial to make her spiritually stronger, while making her dependent on Him.

St. Bernadette is best known for having received a total of eighteen apparitions (or visions) of the Blessed Mother over a six-month period. Bernadette did not initially claim to have viewed the Blessed Mother; rather, she told that she had seen a “beautiful Lady.” It was not until one of her final visits that Bernadette asked who the Lady was. Mary answered, “I am the Immaculate Conception.” This dogma had only been proclaimed four years earlier by the Pope.

Ironically, Bernadette’s parish priest found her message of having seen “the Immaculate Conception” more believable, because he knew that Bernadette had a hard time understanding religion. Bernadette would seem like an unlikely choice to become a messenger for the Blessed Virgin Mary, since she was not a good student and struggled with passing her First Holy Communion class. By the age of fourteen, she had still not passed her class, and this greatly troubled her, because she wanted to receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Nevertheless, the Blessed Mother chose this humble servant to relay her important message.

St. Bernadette was also known for her obedience. On one occasion, Mary told Bernadette to dig a hole, and trust that there would be water. St. Bernadette obediently performed this humiliating task in front of the mocking crowd that doubted whether she was speaking to the Blessed Virgin. The place where Bernadette dug became a huge spring where thousands of desperately ill people are cured miraculously, even until this day. The Grotto at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes is a popular pilgrimage site and the scene of Our Lady’s ongoing healing miracles.

Thirty years after her death, St. Bernadette’s body was uncovered and examined, and found to be incorrupt—that is, her face and arms were perfectly preserved and had not decomposed. St. Bernadette’s body is openly displayed in a coffin of gold and glass in her former order’s motherhouse in Nevers, France.

St. Bernadette's humility, obedience, devotion to the Rosary, and concern for the sick and suffering are important examples for us all.

St. Bernadette, pray for us!