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Dems for Life at March

Michael Sean Winters | Jan. 24, 2011 Distinctly Catholic

Huddled at a large table in the back of a hotal restaurant near Capitol Hill, the Democrats for Life met before the March for Life, scarfing down some hot coffee and breakfast before heading out into the cold Washington streets. Kristen Day, the head of Democrats for Life leads an impromptu strategy session. The group includes a young man from Connecticut, a couple of students from Catholic University, an older couple who head out early to meet with another group, and Stephen Schneck, a professor of politics at Catholic University and a board member of Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good. In previous years they were jeered and they expect more of the same.

But, as they emerge from the hotel, and assemble a tall sign with the group's logo, a woman from Westfield New Jersey asks to take their picture, saying "There's hope." Closer to the stage for the rally, four people ar unpacking "Randall Terry for President" signs from their van.

The Dems for Life join the crowd, standing close enough to the stage for their tall sign to garner attention. A woman from Reisterstown, Maryland comes up within seconds and proclaims "It's a joke. They should become Republicans." She enters into discussion with Day who asks if she supports funding for clinics to help women facing crisis pregnancies and who want to keep their child. "That's nonsense," the woman announces. "China is holding so much of our debt." But, mostly the Dems are left undistrubed and a few people give them the thumbs-up sign.

Two people carry a large poster of President Obama, defaced to look like Hitler, and the slogan "Impeach Obama." One sign announces the presence of the "Jewish Pro-Life Foundation." One wonders what they think of the pre-rally music. A choral group is singing "Jesus, you're the strength of my life."

The crowd is overwhelmingly Catholic and very young, mostly school groups. Many groups hold signs naming hteir parish. The most common sign is that of the Knights of Columbus. A George Washington impersonator holds a sign that reads, "Be a Patriot. Vote Pro-Life." The rally is famously unorganized and this year is no exception. As I head back to the car and drive home, I pass stragglers more than 20 blocks from the rally, still making their way towards their destination.

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