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Homily at Start of National Prayer Vigil for Life

Archbishop Naumann

Although the U.S. presidency carries “enormous power and responsibility,” it does not empower President Joe Biden “to define Catholic doctrine and moral teaching,” the chairman of the U.S. bishops’ Committee on Pro-Life Activities said in his homily at the opening Mass of the annual National Prayer Vigil for Life Jan. 28. “We must pray and fast that the president will cease attempting to confuse people about Catholic teaching by trampling on the sanctity of human life while presenting himself as a devout Catholic,” said Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann of Kansas City, Kansas. Only 250 people attended the annual vigil Mass, which normally packs

“Those erroneous, flawed decisions resulted in the loss of more than 62 million American lives.”

the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. But coronavirus restrictions capped the number of those in attendance at 250 and the March for Life that usually follows the vigil was mostly virtual this year. Archbishop Naumann called Biden’s stance on abortion “religiously and ethically incoherent” because he says he personally opposes abortion “while doing everything within his power to promote and institutionalize abortion” in the U.S. and abroad. The archbishop praised the appointment of Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett to the U.S. Supreme Court and said the court’s current makeup offered “legitimate hope” that the decisions legalizing abortion could be modified or reversed. He also urged Catholics to support the Walking with Moms in Need program, begun last year. Archbishop Naumann’s homily follows.

Missing Pieces

This is my third and final opportunity to have the privilege to preach this annual vigil Mass for the March for Life. In my homily two years ago, I commented on the magnificent mosaics that adorn this basilica dedicated to Our Lady. I observed, however, that the most beautiful of the mosaics was the packed congregation in the pews of the basilica. This evening, we have a lot of missing pieces to that mosaic. Though the basilica has the maximum crowd permitted by the D.C. COVID protocols, it is miniscule compared to the usual crowd.

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