



FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

The nonpartisan public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Florida

201 West Park Avenue, Tallahassee, Florida 32301-7715 * (850) 222-3803 * www.flaccb.org

STATEMENT ON *ROE V. WADE* **DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE LEGAL PROTECTION OF UNBORN LIFE** **January 22, 2022**

On this tragic 49th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* that legalized abortion and stripped the unborn of their fundamental right to life, we mourn the heartbreaking loss of over 62 million victims. The Catholic Church stands emphatically and unreservedly for the rights of the unborn. We look forward with the hope that God will soon bring our nation to a profound awareness of the dignity of human life and a recognition that all lives deserve protection under the law.

We are especially encouraged that the U.S. Supreme Court has heard arguments in the Mississippi abortion case, *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. This case addresses whether banning abortions after 15 weeks gestation is constitutional. Although difficult to predict, this could very well be the case that overturns *Roe* entirely or in part. We are steadfast in praying that there will be a monumental shift in the Court's abortion precedent in favor of protecting unborn children. We entreat the faithful to commit to daily prayer and fasting along with other believers across the country for a decision that honors the sanctity of unborn life through the Pray for Dobbs campaign (www.prayfordobbs.com).

We also remain hopeful that the Florida Supreme Court will have an opportunity to reconsider its 1989 ruling that interpreted our state constitution's privacy clause to find a right to abortion in Florida. We are closely following a case currently on appeal, *Gainesville Woman Care, LLC v. State of Florida*, addressing the constitutionality of a common-sense Florida law requiring a 24-hour reflection period prior to abortion. Though this good law is being challenged on the basis that it violates the state constitutional right to privacy, we pray for a judicial outcome that upholds the pro-life law so that women have more time to deliberate undergoing an abortion. Additionally, we urge Florida's Agency for Healthcare Administration to strengthen enforcement of existing abortion regulations.

As a Church, we are committed to accompanying all women, including those experiencing unplanned pregnancies or considering abortion. One way that we have been serving pregnant women and their families is through the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' initiative *Walking with Moms in Need*, which connects parishioners with volunteer opportunities at community pregnancy resource centers. We wholeheartedly support this ministry that offers tangible, life-affirming support for vulnerable families – fathers, mothers and their babies. As Pope Francis has said, "And among the most fragile are children who do not see the light because their mothers suffer economic, social and cultural conditioning that drives them to give up that wonderful gift that is the birth of a child." (Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Hospital of the Innocents Institute, May 2019)

The Church seeks to be a beacon in a dark world and desires to serve as a field hospital to all who are contemplating or have been harmed by abortion. Even while we recommit to highlighting the great good in embracing life so that abortion is unthinkable, may the Lord continually renew our collective passion to advocate for the protection of unborn children from harm. We ask that the Lord would guide and strengthen our elected and appointed officials in Florida and pray that the legislative and judicial branches at both the state and federal levels come to respect the sacredness of each human life, including the unborn. Let us continue to fight for a culture of life in all spheres so that our society may appreciate the truth that every person—no matter their size, ability, or location—is worthy and worth protecting.

Most Rev. Thomas G. Wenski
Archdiocese of Miami

Most Rev. Gerald M. Barbarito
Diocese of Palm Beach

Most Rev. Frank J. Dewane
Diocese of Venice

Most Rev. John G. Noonan
Diocese of Orlando

Most Rev. Felipe J. Estévez
Diocese of St. Augustine

Most Rev. Gregory L. Parkes
Diocese of St. Petersburg

Most Rev. William A. Wack, C.S.C.
Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee

Most Rev. Enrique E. Delgado
Archdiocese of Miami