



Committee on Pro-Life Activities

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Chairman's Statement on Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*

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January 22 marks the anniversary of the tragic 1973 *Roe v. Wade* U.S. Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion nationwide. While we as the Church have rejoiced that this scourge on our nation no longer stands as the law of the land, we mourn for the more than 65 million children who died during *Roe*'s nearly 50-year reign, and for those that continue to die in places where abortion remains legal. In addition, we recognize the millions of mothers, siblings, and family members whose lives have been impacted by the death of these children.

The *Roe* anniversary is remembered each year as the [Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children](#) for prayer, penance, and our personal recommitment to the cause of life. Our prayers, sacrifices, and efforts to protect human life have never been more essential.

Even with the fall of *Roe*, human life remains gravely threatened by legalized abortion in most states and it continues to be aggressively promoted at the federal level. The U.S. Bishops reaffirmed in November: "Abortion remains our pre-eminent priority as it directly attacks our most vulnerable brothers and sisters, destroying more than a million lives each year in our country alone."

As our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has recently reminded us, "At every moment of its existence, human life must be preserved and defended."

We remain steadfast in our commitment to work for the legal protection of every human life from conception to natural death. This is a responsibility that we all must share – especially now when this very protection is being undermined. As more and more states are impacted by sweeping new proposed laws and ballot referenda to enshrine abortion-on-demand, it is critical that everyone, whatever their role, take the initiative to learn about such threats to life in their area, and to then speak out compassionately with their family, friends, colleagues, and representatives. The truth is seldom easy, but it is necessary. The truth is with us.

At the same time, we recognize that often the most immediate way to protect babies and mothers from abortion is to thoroughly surround mothers in need with loving support, "walking with" them in their journey of motherhood. Each of us is called to radical solidarity with women facing an unexpected or challenging pregnancy. Each of us is called to help mothers in our own community secure material, emotional, and spiritual support for embracing the gift of life. Likewise, we must also support policies that assist women and their children and help families to flourish. I thank the millions of Catholics who are already personally living out this Gospel call, and I humbly invite dioceses, parishes, and individuals to come alongside vulnerable mothers and children through our nationwide, parish-based initiative, [Walking with Moms in Need](#).

We must likewise extend the hand of compassion to all who are suffering from participation in abortion. The Church offers Christ's forgiveness, healing and hope to women and men through the sacraments and abortion healing ministries like [Project Rachel Ministry](#).

May all people of faith and good will proclaim that human life is a precious gift from God and that each person who receives this gift has responsibilities toward God, self, and others. And may we work together towards the day when society, through its laws and institutions, protects and nurtures human life at every stage of its existence.

Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge
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USCCB Committee on Pro-Life Activities