



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

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CONTACT:

Michele Taylor
Associate Director for Communications
(850) 205-6817
mtaylor@flaccb.org

Catholic Bishops of Florida Recognize 50 Years Since *Roe v. Wade* Decision

TALLAHASSEE, FL (January 17, 2023) – Florida’s Catholic bishops have released a joint statement that observes January 22, 2023 as marking 50 years since the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*. The Catholic Church annually designates January 22 as a day of prayer and penance, called the "Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children."

The full statement follows:

"Today marks 50 years since *Roe v. Wade*, the U.S. Supreme Court decision that imposed by judicial 'fiat' the most extreme abortion policy in the Western world. It deprived more than 63 million unborn children of their right to life and severely limited the ability of states to mitigate the harms of abortion through legislation.

"On June 24, 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court’s landmark ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization* overturned *Roe*, allowing elected representatives at the state level to once again protect women and their children from abortion. This is a fruit of prayer, born of a commitment to justice.

"Millions of women and men, children, and families have experienced the heartbreak of abortion over the last five decades. We maintain a profound sense of sorrow and grief for both the tragic loss of unborn children since 1973 and that abortion continues in Florida today. Our ultimate goal is to foster a culture of life in which hearts and minds are changed so that abortion is unthinkable. We remain hopeful as *Dobbs* opens a new chapter in our efforts to engage all people of good will to protect women and children from abortion and empower women and vulnerable families in their times of need.

"We applaud the restrictions enacted in the 2022 Florida legislative session to limit abortion to the first 15 weeks of pregnancy. The law mirrors the underlying Mississippi law at issue in *Dobbs*. It was a prudent and beneficial step for Florida as the U.S. Supreme Court considered the case. Our advocacy for the legal protection of life in the womb must continue to make the most of the opportunities presented by *Dobbs*. The legislature must enact further limits on abortion.

"The current legal challenge to the 15-week limit provides expectant hope. Like *Roe*, the Florida Supreme Court case wrongfully interpreting a broad right to abortion in the Florida Constitution may soon be overturned.

"Additionally, Florida can do more to promote alternatives to abortion, particularly through the network of pro-life pregnancy help centers that assist women and families with young children. United with our

fellow bishops across the United States in our support for the *Walking with Moms in Need* initiative, we continue to call on Catholics and people of good will to support and engage in the good work undertaken in these agencies.

“We pray that Christ will guide us as we work collectively towards the full legal protection of every human life. May every child conceived be protected in law and welcomed in life.”

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. Gregory L. Parkes
Diocese of St. Petersburg

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

Most Rev. Erik T. Pohlmeier
Diocese of St. Augustine

Most Rev. Enrique E. Delgado
Archdiocese of Miami

The statement is also available online in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

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