



The Ohio Catholic Bishops' Response to the Recent Supreme Court Decision:

The Catholic Commitment to Life and to Walking with Women in Need

The Catholic Bishops of Ohio are encouraged by the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. This is a positive step toward a desperately needed conversion to a culture of life in our country, one that respects the inherent dignity and sacredness of every human being from conception to natural death. This decision enables the possibility of the State of Ohio to fully protect the lives of preborn children. The Catholic Church in Ohio – including its dioceses, eparchies, parishes, and social service ministries – remains committed to serving women in crisis pregnancies, both before and after delivery, with both material resources and personal accompaniment so that they can flourish and contribute to the common good.

The constant teaching of the Catholic Church is that human life begins at conception. God alone is the Author and Lord of life. Therefore, the intentional taking of innocent human life is intrinsically evil and must always be opposed. Modern science only strengthens the Church's opposition to abortion, since advancements in genetics and prenatal imaging increasingly demonstrate that a unique human life begins at conception.

Pope St. John Paul II noted in his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life)* that challenges facing expectant mothers include lack of support from the father, financial strains, concerns about her own health and that of her child, and pressures from family and friends. The many social service ministries of and associated with the Catholic Church – including pregnancy care centers, Catholic Charities, St. Vincent de Paul conferences, Catholic healthcare systems, and Catholic parishes – stand ready to support expectant mothers in difficult circumstances, both during pregnancy and after their child is born. This commitment is consistent with Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel)* in which he calls for the Church to be an evangelizing community of encounter and accompaniment, "standing by people every step of the way, no matter how difficult or lengthy this may prove to be" (EG 24).

The Catholic Bishops of Ohio urge all people of good will both to pray for and actively assist pregnant mothers in need.

O Blessed Mother, you received the good news of the incarnation of Christ, your Son, with faith and trust. Grant your protection to all pregnant mothers facing difficulties.

Guide us as we strive to make our parish communities places of welcome and assistance for mothers in need. Help us become instruments of God's love and compassion.

Mary, Mother of the Church, graciously help us to build a culture of life and a civilization of love, together with all people of good will, to the praise and glory of God, the Creator and lover of life. Amen.

A CULTURE OF LIFE AND CHARITY

The Catholic Church's vision of a culture of life infused with Christian love in action includes the following:

- Accompany women and couples who need help during and after pregnancy through our parish initiative, Walking with Moms in Need, and many other social services.
- Welcome any woman or child needing assistance into our Catholic parishes with life-affirming support and referral to appropriate programs and resources.
- Inform Catholics throughout Ohio of our tremendous commitment to enable families to flourish and contribute to the common good, by engaging and listening to mothers and fathers, especially those with limited resources or disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Advocate for our state to prioritize transformative family policies, including an expansive child tax credit or allowance, increased access to affordable housing, expanded paid leave for families, robust social support for homeless pregnant and parenting women, and streamlined processes for families desiring to foster and adopt children.
- Raise awareness of the services and location of pregnancy resource centers throughout Ohio that provide life-affirming care.
- Minister to women and men seeking healing after an abortion, primarily through Project Rachel Ministry, so that they receive renewal through Christ's infinite mercy.
- Recognize the sanctity and dignity of human life in all its phases through programs and/or legislative advocacy to assist refugees and overcome the death penalty, euthanasia, racism, poverty, homelessness, domestic violence, climate change and gun violence.

In all these commitments, we seek to empower Catholics in Ohio to serve families with humility, gentleness, and patience in a way that reflects the Person, the Gospel and the Teaching of Jesus Christ. May we never tire of building a culture of life, so all might recognize the immeasurable value of each human life from conception to natural death.

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Most Rev. Edward C. Malesic
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