



Statement of Bishop Thomas J. Tobin  
regarding the US Supreme Court Ruling  
on Roe v. Wade

June 24, 2022

*I have set before you life and death,  
the blessing and the curse.  
Choose life, then, that you and  
your descendants may live. (Dt 30:19)*

The Catholic Church has been clear and consistent in teaching that abortion is a grave moral evil. The Second Vatican Council decreed that abortion is an “unspeakable crime.” The Catechism of the Catholic Church insists that “human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception . . . Direct abortion is gravely contrary to the moral law.” In recent years, all of the popes have spoken clearly in condemning abortion. Pope Francis has said, simply and powerfully, “Abortion is murder.”

For this reason, I am very pleased that the Supreme Court has now effectively overturned Roe v. Wade that for decades has directed abortion legislation in this country. The decision is proper for both moral and legal reasons. In recognizing this decision, however, it is abundantly clear that the work on behalf of human life is not over; it has now just moved to a new arena and has assumed new urgency.

I take this opportunity to recognize the many members of our Church and the community who have been courageously and steadfastly committed to the cause of human life. Your commitment has not been in vain; your commitment has made a significant difference and you can be certain that God is pleased with your efforts.

While rightly insisting that abortion is evil, the Catholic Church also recognizes the particular needs that many women encounter when they are pregnant. For several years already, the Diocese of Providence has responded to this need with important programs such as St. Gabriel’s Call that provides personal and material assistance to pregnant women, new moms, and their infant children; and also the Cabrini Fund that offers financial scholarships to assist parents with child care expenses. These programs have supported women and children, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, for many years.

In light of ongoing needs of women and their children, I have directed our diocesan staff to increase the support we can offer to women and children through

these already existent diocesan programs, and to be alert to other and new ways of providing assistance to women, children and families in the days to come.

The Supreme Court decision means that individual states will now have the responsibility of addressing abortion in their own jurisdictions. Sadly, Rhode Island has adopted one of the most liberal abortion laws in the nation, a disgraceful law that permits abortion even until the moment of birth. Some consider this to be “settled law,” but a law that permits the termination of children, including viable infants, should not be settled at all. I plead with political leaders in Rhode Island to do the right thing – to revisit our abortion laws in a way that safeguards the sanctity of human life and eliminates the enormous harm caused by abortion – to unborn infants, to vulnerable women, to the minority community, and to the dignity and quality of life in our state.

I wish to emphasize that those who support and promote abortion are not our enemies. They too are children of God and our brothers and sisters. We wish only what is good and holy and helpful for them, and we pray that they will sincerely examine their conscience, and will recognize the great dignity and value of all human life, including that of unborn children.

Indeed, the commitment on behalf of human life does not require only a change of laws, but also a change of hearts. This is, ultimately, a spiritual battle. The Catholic Church in the Diocese of Providence will continue to preach and teach about the inalienable dignity of human life, from the time of conception until the moment of natural death, and we will pray fervently for the change of hearts that enables all people, especially our leaders, to recognize the beauty and the value of human life and how contrary abortion is to God’s will and his eternal design for the well-being of the human family.

Someday, future generations of Americans will look back in disbelief and shame on our time and wonder how such a “civilized society” could allow, and even celebrate the widespread and zealous killing of its own children. They will wonder how we could have strayed so far from the natural law, from widely accepted moral principles, and even from common-sense human decency. When that day comes, I want those future generations to look back and say that the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Providence did the right thing – that we were truly wise and courageous in speaking out against abortion and in defending human life. And personally, I want to be counted among those who spoke out boldly and persistently on this critical issue, the most important moral issue of our time.

**+Thomas J. Tobin**  
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