









## Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Florida on the 46th Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* January 22, 2019

- Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, no. 83

On this annual Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children, we pray that the Lord enlighten the eyes of our hearts and lead our nation out of the darkness of the decision to legalize abortion 46 years ago. On this anniversary, we pray for those whom we will never know, and we pray for their mothers and fathers who have suffered this loss. We pray for each other that our enlightenment will lead us to honor the sacredness of each life, given to us by God for God.

However, we are encouraged by having celebrated this last year another anniversary that of *Humanae Vitae* and the canonization of its author, Saint Pope Paul VI. This prophetic encyclical shook the world 50 years ago with its countercultural instruction rejecting artificial contraception and welcoming children as gifts from God that are part of married love. Yet, today, growing numbers of women of all faiths and no faith are rejecting artificial contraception and realizing that fertility is uses are discovering natural family planning as it promotes healthy reproduction, healthy relationships, and a healthy environment.

increasingly rejecting abortion and *Roe v. Wade* as states continue to adopt more limitations on abortion and expand alternatives to abortion. During the 2018 legislative session, the people of God and others of good will, through the Florida Conference of Catholic Bishops, advocated for the addition of the Florida Pregnancy Care Network to Florida statues. This legislation better positions a network of over 100 pregnancy support centers across our state to support women who choose life for their unborn children, even when facing an unplanned pregnancy.

irreversible decision of the mother for her and the defenseless child within her womb. While physicians ensure patients are fully informed prior to other serious medical procedures, Florida courts invoked the right to privacy in our state constitution to block a good law requiring a 24-hour reflection period prior to abortion, pending appeal.

We advocate for the reconsideration of these decisions, and we remain hopeful that the courts will ultimately protect women in Florida from the predatory practices of the abortion industry. Otherwise, even if *Roe v. Wade* were overturned, the state of Florida could retain permissive abortion policies.

We join together today renewing our cry for an end to everything which denies the sacredness of life, including the unacceptable judicial decision in *Roe v. Wade* favoring abortion. We ask God to help us to protect unborn children and their families, and to grant wisdom and courage for those in elected office. May our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our hearts, that we may recognize that devaluing the most innocent and vulnerable life leads to a coarseness and callousness towards one another and all life.

**Most Reverend Thomas G. Wenski**  
Archdiocese of Miami

**Most Reverend Gerald M. Barbarito**  
Diocese of Palm Beach

**Most Reverend Frank J. Dewane**  
Diocese of Venice

**Most Reverend John G. Noonan**  
Diocese of Orlando

**Most Reverend Felipe J. Estévez**  
Diocese of St. Augustine

**Most Reverend Gregory L. Parkes**  
Diocese of St. Petersburg

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

**Most Reverend Peter Baldacchino**  
Archdiocese of Miami

**Most Reverend Enrique E. Delgado**  
Archdiocese of Miami

