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June 24, 2022

The Catholic Bishops of Kentucky have issued the following statement in response to the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision on *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*.

For centuries, the Catholic Church has proclaimed a rich social teaching based upon a deep respect for the sacredness of every human life, including life in the womb. This thread of the dignity of human life is woven into all of our moral and social teaching, including our advocacy for programs and initiatives that confront the sin of racism, lift people out of poverty, end capital punishment, support persons with disabilities, address gun violence, repair a broken immigration system, foster thriving families, and care for our common home, the Earth. We believe that the deliberate decision to end a life in the womb is not the answer for women, children or families. As Pope Francis states, “Yet this defense of unborn human life is closely linked to the defense of each and every other human right. It involves the conviction that a human being is always sacred and inviolable, in any situation and at every stage of development. Human beings are ends in themselves and never a means of resolving other problems...It is not progressive to try to resolve problems by ending a human life.” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 213-214)

As our nation deals with the pivotal decision of the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, we know that people will respond with polarizing statements and varying degrees of outrage, fear, support, sorrow, and joy. We would like to propose that we take this opportunity to channel what we regard as a positive, life-affirming decision into action to support women, children, and families in our Commonwealth.

We affirm that every child is a sacred gift. We know that families may need help in welcoming this gift, through programs and policies that will address the challenges and mitigate the pressure that women may feel in making the decision to seek an abortion.

**Most Reverend
Shelton J. Fabre**
Archbishop of Louisville

**Most Reverend
John C. Iffert**
Bishop of Covington

**Most Reverend
John Stowe, OFM Conv.**
Bishop of Lexington

**Most Reverend
William F. Medley**
Bishop of Owensboro

Jason D. Hall
Executive
Director

Kentucky's bishops have worked on both legislative and concrete efforts to assist mothers and families. For two decades, we supported Opportunities for Life, a 24-hour hotline that provided assistance, resources, and hope to pregnant women in need. Today, this assistance is provided through grants issued through Catholic Charities to various social service and pregnancy resource programs. We have endorsed legislation to support families and women in vulnerable circumstances, such as SB 18, passed during the 2019 session, which provides workplace protections for women who are pregnant or nursing. We have advocated for the creation of a state-level Earned Income Tax Credit. At both the federal and state levels, the bishops are working on numerous efforts to support families, such as making the Child Tax Credit permanent and expanding paid family and medical leave. We must do everything we can to build a culture that makes welcoming and supporting life the overriding priority.

Our parishes, archdiocesan agencies, such as Catholic Charities, healthcare institutions, and pro-life shelters and centers are dedicated to supporting women and unborn children in difficult circumstances. These internal efforts, which quietly take place every day in our communities, must be accompanied by public policy that allow families in all circumstances to thrive. These include, but are not limited to:

- Increasing access to affordable housing and other material assistance.
- Support and resources for programs that promote welcoming children through birth, adoption, or fostering.
- Offering greater access to mental health resources, healthcare, domestic violence assistance, childcare assistance, educational and employment opportunities, and paid leave for parents.

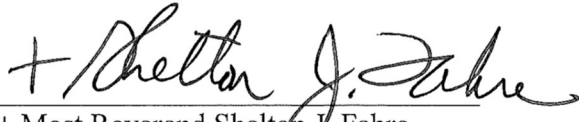
As we advocate for these pro-family policies so vital to the common good, we also call upon all Catholics to walk with moms and their children in need and to reflect God's mercy and love to all caught up in these fraught issues surrounding abortion, including those who choose abortion.

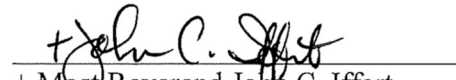
We also call upon all citizens to thoughtfully and prayerfully consider and vote "YES for Life" this November by supporting Amendment #2. This proposed constitutional amendment is very simple and will prevent our state courts from ever issuing a decision like Roe v. Wade. It adds one sentence to the Kentucky Constitution:

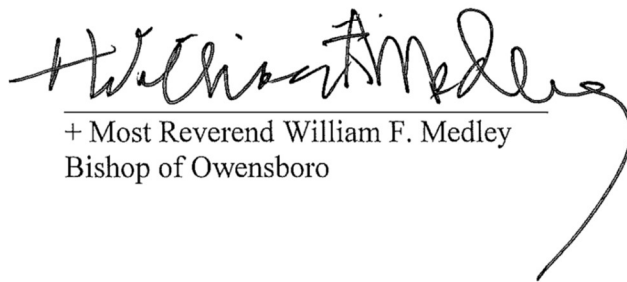
"To protect human life, nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to secure or protect a right to abortion or require the funding of abortion."

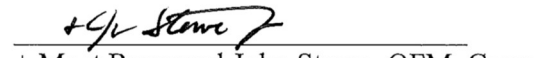


As related in the Gospel of St. Matthew, chapter 25, Jesus exhorted all of His followers to care for the most vulnerable among us, “Amen I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.” Who could be more vulnerable than an unborn child and a pregnant mother in need? As we move beyond Roe v. Wade, let us work together to create the conditions that will support mothers in choosing life.


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