



STATEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF FLORIDA ON THE 27th ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V. WADE

January 22, 2000

This millennial year marks the 27th anniversary of the United States Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade*, a decision we have long condemned and deeply regret. This decision removed protection of law from the unborn and launched an unprecedented attack on mothers and children in this country. By conservative counts, almost 40 million children have been removed from our society as a result of this evil.

This nation witnessed a similar unjust decision from our highest court in the case of *Dred Scot*, which similarly deprived African-Americans of the protection of law. Just as that deplorable decision has been overcome, we trust that our ongoing efforts to restore protection for unborn children will one day bear fruit.

We are increasingly concerned about a growing tendency in our society in which the powerful predominate and the powerless are set aside or eliminated. Our concern is for unborn children, helpless victims of abortion; for the elderly and incurably ill, subject at times to euthanasia; and for the many other people relegated to the margins of society by consumerism and materialism. These attitudes and actions must be overcome and the Church and all people of goodwill must persevere in advocating a consistent ethic of life.

On this sad anniversary, we commend those who choose life even in difficult situations. We affirm all people of good will who sacrifice so much of themselves to encourage women to choose life, who assist families to choose life, and who counsel women facing difficult pregnancies.

Further, each of us is called to pray for and counsel women who have chosen abortion. Each of us is a sinner, but no one is beyond the saving power of the Lord. The doors of our churches remain open to all who may need assistance and we pledge to reach out to those who suffer from painful abortion experiences, to share with them God's love and mercy.

Every human life, at every stage of development, is a gift from God. We pledge our continued defense of this truth and our continued effort and prayer that *Roe v Wade* will one day be overcome.

Archbishop John C. Favalora
Archdiocese of Miami

Bishop Norbert M. Dorsey, CP
Diocese of Orlando

Bishop John J. Snyder
Diocese of St. Augustine

Bishop Anthony J. O'Connell
Diocese of Palm Beach

Bishop John J. Nevins
Diocese of Venice

Bishop Agustín A. Román
Archdiocese of Miami

Bishop John H. Ricard, SSJ
Diocese of Pensacola-Tallahassee

Bishop Gilberto Fernandez
Archdiocese of Miami

Bishop Robert N. Lynch
Diocese of St. Petersburg

Bishop Thomas G. Wenski
Archdiocese of Miami