



**Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Florida
On the 31st Anniversary of Roe v Wade
January 22, 2004**

Entering into this fourth decade of legal abortion, we are again called to speak against this attack on life which claims two victims – the innocent child and the innocence of the woman. We continue to proclaim Church doctrine which says the voluntary taking of an innocent human life is gravely immoral. We also express our concern for women and men who are suffering in silence because of abortion. The church offers hope, healing and forgiveness through programs such as Project Rachel.

Being pro-life means caring for all creation including the baby in the womb and the mother of the baby. The Church continues to offer help to any woman who needs medical, physical or emotional support for her and the unique individual who will enter the world as a new life. If a woman feels unprepared for motherhood, there are many married couples who would welcome an addition to their family through adoption, a special sacrifice of life and love. We commend the countless volunteers and staff in crisis pregnancy centers, Catholic Charities agencies and other pro-life agencies and parish programs who act as our brothers' and sisters' keepers by following the commandment: "love your neighbor as yourself."

Despite the immediate legal challenge, we are heartened by the passage of the ban on the heinous procedure known as partial birth abortion. Thanks to the commitment of legislators and President Bush, the voices for life prevailed and the journey begins to overturn abortion on demand.

Our world has been deprived of the love and contributions to humanity which would have enriched our world because close to 45 million babies have been destroyed by abortion since 1973.

We are alarmed and concerned particularly in our own state, as the rate of abortion continues to climb, now in excess of 90,000 abortions a year. With the striking down of the parental notification law by the Florida Supreme Court, young women will continue to make the life-changing decisions of obtaining an abortion without benefit of the wisdom and guidance of their parents. This also makes Florida an abortion destination for those wishing to escape parental involvement laws in other states.

We commend our Governor, and those courageous lawmakers, who are steadfast and consistent in defending the sanctity of life. We must continue to fight for those entrusted to us by God through the miracle of life. We will not rest in our efforts until our nation and culture respects all members of the human race, the born and unborn.

Archbishop John C. Favalora
Archdiocese of Miami
Bishop John H. Ricard, SSJ
Diocese of Pensacola/Tallahassee

Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito, JCL
Diocese of Palm Beach

Bishop John J. Nevins
Diocese of Venice
Bishop Robert N. Lynch
Diocese of St. Petersburg

Coadjutor Bishop Thomas G. Wenski
Diocese of Orlando

Bishop Norbert M. Dorsey, CP
Diocese of Orlando
Bishop Victor Galeone
Diocese of St. Augustine

Auxiliary Bishop Felipe J. Estévez
Archdiocese of Miami