



Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Florida on the 33rd Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* January 22, 2006

On this 33rd anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision and its companion case, *Doe v. Bolton*, women continue to suffer physical, emotional and spiritual harm from their decision to abort their unborn child. The world also suffers, losing the gifts and talents of all the aborted children God created in His image and likeness. Every life is part of God's plan as revealed in Jeremiah 1:5: "*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.*"

The truth compels us to accept the mystery of life from its conception rather than our very subjective effort to define when it begins. The dubiously formulated right to privacy is ill defined and deeply damages human dignity and the common good.

In Florida, the passage of the Women's Health & Safety Act and Parental Notice of Abortion Act hold promise in the battle to decrease abortions. With increased funding, crisis pregnancy centers can and will provide emotional and financial support to women experiencing an unplanned pregnancy. Even though the number of abortions in the United States is decreasing, over one million of our brothers and sisters in Christ are killed in the womb each year, including over 90,000 per year in Florida.

A new threat to pre-born life is genetic testing, tempting parents to abort any baby not considered perfect. The commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves demands that all life in all stages must be protected, particularly those with special needs. "We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution," Pope Benedict XVI pointed out at his Inaugural Mass. "Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary."

For any women or men who have suffered separation from the Church because of an abortion, we encourage you to call the statewide Project Rachel help line* for confidential counseling. We have all sinned against God sometime in our life, but He is "slow to anger, rich in mercy." Reconciliation with the Lord brings peace and healing.

We welcome indications that more citizens in our country prefer that the matter of abortion be returned to the States, as the unborn will find greater protection than presently exists under the *Roe v. Wade* decision. We call on all women and men of good will to join us in praying for the day when laws violating the right to life are set aside or overturned.

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