



Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Florida on the 34th Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* January 22, 2007

As we mark another year of the ongoing assault on unborn life initiated by the infamous Supreme Court decisions, *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*, we mourn the loss of almost 50 million brothers and sisters in Christ who have died prematurely through abortion. We cannot retreat from the fight to gain recognition of each baby in the womb as a unique individual created by God and not just a body part to be discarded at will.

Laws are created to ensure a just and civil society, recognizing the common good but also guaranteeing the rights of individuals. The human being is to be respected and treated as a person from the moment of conception; and therefore from that same moment his rights as a person must be recognized, among which first and foremost is the inviolable right of every innocent human being to life.

In each of the last two years, reported abortions in Florida numbered over 90,000. National polls indicate a continuing decline in support for unlimited access to abortion, and we are hopeful that laws passed in Florida will soon bear fruit by reducing the numbers of abortions in this state as they have in others.

As we have for many years, we invite all women who need help in their journey during pregnancy to contact the Church for referral to the Gabriel Project or a crisis pregnancy center. You are not alone - men and women of good will have and continue to love and care for pregnant women and children. Pope Benedict XVI, in a 2006 New Year's address to civil authorities in Rome, stated, "care must be taken that pregnant women in difficult conditions do not lack material help, and that drugs which in some way conceal the gravity of abortion are not introduced as an anti-life choice."

Since we are all imperfect human beings, we sometimes fail to make right choices in life. God's mercy, love and forgiveness are offered in the sacrament of reconciliation. We urge all men and women who have participated in an abortion to seek the peace God offers to all who ask Him. We commend Project Rachel and Rachel's Vineyard for those who have been involved in an abortion.

As a sign of our ongoing commitment to change hearts and minds and speak the truth about the evil of abortion, we have produced a presentation available at the Florida Catholic Conference Website (<http://www.flacathconf.org/aboutabortion/>). Please visit this site to learn more about the facts and Catholic Church teaching on abortion. May God bless our efforts and answer our prayers, ending the destruction of human life. We will not rest until this day arrives.

Archbishop John C. Favalora
Archdiocese of Miami

Bishop John J. Nevins
Diocese of Venice

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

Bishop Robert N. Lynch **Bishop Victor Galeone**
Diocese of St. Petersburg Diocese of St. Augustine

Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito, JCL
Diocese of Palm Beach

Bishop Thomas G. Wenski
Diocese of Orlando

Coadjutor Bishop Frank J. Dewane
Diocese of Venice

Auxiliary Bishop Felipe J. Estévez
Archdiocese of Miami

Auxiliary Bishop John G. Noonan
Archdiocese of Miami