



**STATEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF FLORIDA
ON THE 29TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE *ROE V. WADE* DECISION
January 17, 2002**

We regretfully recall the anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade* on January 22, 1973, which legalized abortion on demand in our country, even partial-birth abortion. We are deeply saddened that the assault on innocent, unborn children continues and that its true nature is hidden from many today. Particularly disconcerting to us is that the numbers of abortions in Florida rose to more than 88,000 in 2000, while across the country abortion is becoming less prevalent.

The terrorist attacks of September 11 are another tragic occurrence in our country's history. This tragedy jars our nation from a pervasive moral relativism and renews in us a shared sense that certain acts are "morally wrong" and "evil." Whether in planes or clinics, direct taking of innocent human life is always evil. Life is the first gift from God, who calls us to an eternal relationship and communion from the beginning of our lives. This is the source of human dignity. Life is worthy of protection at all stages, including unborn embryos, workers in office buildings, and our elders.

We especially lament the position of public officials who support the abortion culture by their refusal to "bring personal moral convictions to bear" when they have the power to limit or end abortion. We ask, "Is not the law a 'moral' concern?" Certainly, all laws create a shared social moral code. We urge action by elected and appointed officials that will always protect and enhance human life.

Each of us has sinned before God and we all need the Lord's saving action on our behalf. This holds for those who have participated in abortion in some way. We urge all with abortion experiences to recall this, and to seek and experience God's forgiveness and mercy. These fruits of God's love are extended abundantly, particularly through the sacrament of penance. Also available is the Project Rachel Program, now expanded across the state, and geared especially to mediate healing for those affected by abortion and its painful aftermath.

We commend those who themselves have overcome the fears and anxieties and chosen life for their unborn children. We praise the efforts of those who have sought to support those in crisis pregnancies, as well as their children, physically, emotionally and spiritually. We celebrate God's saving and healing action in the lives of those who have been hurt by abortion. We laud the faithful effort of our priests who promote this message positively and prophetically. We gratefully honor the lay leaders who collaborate with their pastors in activities to promote a deeper respect for life privately and publicly.

On this sad anniversary, we pledge our continued prayers and support of these activities, which are hopeful signs to us. We shall defend human dignity at all stages of life and invite persons of faith and good will to join us until the abortion culture in America ends.

(Statement available on line at:

www.flacathconf.org/Publications/BishopsStatements/Bpst2000/Bsroew02.htm

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