



**Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Florida  
on the 38<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*  
January 22, 2011**

The first Sunday in October, since 1972, has been set aside by the Catholic bishops in the United States to pray for a culture of life and an end to abortion. While surveys show there is growing support for strict limits on the availability of abortion, unborn babies are still dying from chemical and surgical procedures that sometimes cause the death of the mother. We are grateful for the decline in numbers to 82,000 reported abortions in Florida for 2009 but we grieve over even one untimely death of one of God's creations, a unique and irreplaceable human being.

We are concerned about the growing chorus of voices in society, even among the young people in our church, who reject Church teaching about marriage as the proper union where one man and one woman form a lifelong partnership for the procreation and education of offspring. The current infatuation with sex as a recreational activity with little thought about the person that could be created through the sexual union only perpetuates abortion as a bad solution for what is referred to as a "problem pregnancy." Pornography, sexting, prostitution and other ills distort the sexuality with which God endowed humanity for the expression of mutual self-giving love and perpetuation of the human race.

For a pregnant woman at any stage of life who needs emotional or material assistance for her and her unborn child, the church offers help through crisis pregnancy centers and parish programs such as Gabriel Project. The growth of 40 Days for Life is proof that people are willing and able to help others choose life over the culture of death.

There are people who suffer from guilt and separation from the Church because of participation in an abortion at some point in their life. Healing and God's love, mercy and compassion are there for those who seek confession for what one may feel is an "unforgiveable sin." Project Rachel and Rachel's Vineyard, nationally recognized post-abortion programs approved by the Catholic Church, offer a confidential process for healing and reconciliation.

The fundamental human right, the presupposition of every other right, is the right to life itself. This is true of life from the moment of conception until its natural end. Abortion, consequently, cannot be a human right—it is the very opposite. (cf. Pope Benedict XVI, 2007 address to Austrian diplomatic corps).

We pray that our great nation will come back to its founding principles, the first of which is that we are all created equal, endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights, the most important being the right to life.

**PROJECT RACHEL – CALL TOLL FREE 888-456-4673 <http://hopeafterabortion.com/>**

**Archbishop Thomas G. Wenski**  
Archdiocese of Miami

**Bishop Victor Galeone**  
Diocese of St. Augustine

**Bishop Robert N. Lynch**  
Diocese of St. Petersburg

**Bishop John G. Noonan**  
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