



BISHOP MICHAEL PFEIFER, O.M.I.
Bishop Emeritus of the Diocese of San Angelo

Pro-Life Pastoral Letter for the Unborn a Half Century after Roe v Wade

**Even Without Roe v Wade, Many Precious Babies Are Still Being Killed By Abortion.
January 22, 2023**

2023 is the first full year without Roe v Wade but thousands of precious babies are still being killed by abortion. The abortion lobby is spending many millions of dollars, including your taxpayer dollars, on a comprehensive strategy to expand abortion even more this year.

The church, all pro-lifers have much work to do in promoting pro-life messages to its own members and society at large. Archbishop William Lori, now Vice President of the USCCB, after serving as chairman of the committee on pro-life for the US bishops, points out that the wonderful blessing of Roe v Wade being overturned allows more freedom at both state and federal level to enact pro-life law but the necessary work to build a culture of life in the United States is far from being finished rather it is focused differently. Many national and legislative battles remain including maintaining the long-standing Hyde Amendment Protections which limits government funding for abortion. The archbishop reminds us that there are many efforts at a presidential and many at a congressional level to use power to facilitate abortion, instead of using their power to increase support and care for mothers and children in challenging situations. He states, “this single-minded extremism must end”, strongly encouraging President Biden and his administration to recognize the humanity in pre-born children and the genuine life-giving care needed by women in this country. This “extremism” once again manifested itself, when tens of thousands took part in the recent March for Life, Biden took the occasion to strongly pledge restoring of abortion rights. Biden needs to remember there are no abortion rights in the Constitution nor in the Commandments of God.

Pivotal Moment in Our Culture

In this pivotal moment in our culture, we bishops as shepherds of the church in the US, need to show as a community a much stronger, clearer, and unified pastoral direction of how all pro-lifers can address the critical abortion issues that confront us, as we strongly encourage and support all other pro-life issues. We need to eliminate any divisions that separates us as a body of bishops from addressing the means and ways for our pro-life ministries, especially for the unborn and social justice ministries. The more unified the church is, the more effective will be our witness. Our clear teaching has the goal of addressing the sacredness of all human life at all stages of life, and to use all the means we have guided by the Holy Spirit to overcome attacks on life and to promote and protect the life of every human being from the very beginning, and to ensure that pregnant and parenting mothers are fully supported in the care of their children before and after birth. This must be our strong, clear message for all pro-lifers and with political leaders at all levels. We bishops need to be more proactive in leading these pro-life efforts and especially with our president and other elected officials.

New Government Funding Bill

The massive full-year government funding bill in its proposal for approval contained a huge gift of taxpayer funds to the nation’s largest abortion business which is Planned Parenthood. In the proposed Omnibus bill, which was approved, Life News and the ACLJ point out Planned Parenthood would receive \$286 million in one year even after its 2020 report released in September 2022, shows it aborted 383,460 babies, and has \$2.5 billion in assets. Planned Parenthood is the largest supplier of abortions which means it kills 41% of all babies killed in abortion in the US.

The recent elections unprecedented spending by Planned Parenthood and its allies was to expand abortion and make sure human life is not protected by law at the state level. Sadly, after Roe v Wade, there's an anti-life wave sweeping across the country. Many pro-life states are worse now than pre-Roe v Wade. It is disheartening that many pro-life citizens are buying the lie of big abortion. Contrary to popular belief, the overturn of Roe did not end abortion, and sadly many pro-lifers have fallen into complacency and apathy. At the same time, we bishops are deeply grateful for the good number of pro-life people who actively join the pro-life cause every day. Your efforts are changing hearts and lives are being saved. Now, the battle ground for our beliefs and actions must be much stronger at a state level, working with local legislators and politicians, as we continue all our strong national efforts.

We have the God-Given Tools

Lead by the bishops, priests, deacons, men and women religious, Catholic organizations, like the Knights of Columbus, and all dear lay pro-life leaders must come together in a unified effort to fight back against the deadly evil of increased abortions. Now as we address and support all other pro-life issues, is the time to increase our efforts to push back stronger against the pro-death agenda of the abortion lobby. Sadly, the president and many congress people are constantly proposing ways to codify abortion. We are up against a billion-dollar industry supported by the Biden Administration and with financial backing and support of many elites in the media, in Hollywood, and big businesses and companies that subsidize abortion travel for their employees, and higher education. But we pro-lifers have the God-given tools to end abortion in America and build a culture of life, but we need the help of the entire community and especially to reach more young people online before they fall for big abortion propaganda. All our pro-life actions must be based on constant prayer in all our parishes and a deep trust in Jesus, our good Shepherd, to lead us through this dark valley. We need many more weekly pro-life masses to be offered, many more Holy hours before the Blessed Sacrament, fasting, and pro-life prayer groups in all our communities and many more people, praying in front of Planned Parenthood and other abortion centers, for the unborn and God's grace, light, wisdom, and direction for all our pro-life efforts. We bishops with our priests should organize all parishes to constantly rotate having people in peaceful, prayerful witness before these centers. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we then give new witness to our scriptural belief, confirmed by the latest true scientific research, that a new human being begins at conception. Another vital political, social, spiritual means to overcome abortion is for us bishops to encourage our priests and lay pro-lifers, joined with other Christians, and those of other denominations, to advocate with our local officials to have more cities throughout the country to be declared as sanctuary communities for the unborn and not permitting abortion.

Winning the Hearts and Minds of Catholics and Others

A special means of teaching our people about the sacredness of the unborn is to show videos and ultrasound pictures of the brutal abortion act of the tearing apart of a precious unborn child in great suffering in a mother's womb. Building a culture of life demands that we win the hearts and minds of all our fellow Catholics and many others. It also demands that we speak forthrightly and strongly in the public square. In an era of disinformation and falsehood, we must courageously with the Holy Spirit give witness in our preaching and action to the God-given truth about the beauty and sacredness of human life. And as we state in our pro-life plans, we need to take more positive pastoral action to support the precious unborn and offer care at every level for their parents, especially their mothers. It is urgent that we also take more courageous and unified action as bishops to encourage members of congress and our president to pass legislation, that advances the health, safety and flourishing of women, children, and families; and we strongly encourage the passage of bills, that support and fund families, such as the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act and support for child tax credit, paid family leave, pregnancy resource centers, child care, housing and nutrition, maternal and child health, adoption, healthy relations, for environmental protections and inclusion of immigrant families in social programs.

These will help to build an authentic life affirming society. In all our pro-life activities, we urge all to join hands and hearts and lock arms together with other Christians and all those who hold the sacredness of the life of the unborn. A special advocate and supporter of our pro-life ministry for the unborn is Dr. Alveda King, niece of the great civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King. Alveda has carried on the crusade for justice – most particularly and passionately for African-American children in their mother’s wombs, and she states that the slaughter of innocence is the biggest civil rights issue of our time. With her, we advocate for life and recommit ourselves to making abortion unthinkable.

The Pre-Eminent Life Issue

At our annual meeting of the US bishops in November 2022, it was affirmed that abortion will remain the preeminent issue for 2024 elections. The bishops will not revise our voting guide which states, the threat to abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place in the sanctuary of the family, and because of the enormous number of lives destroyed. At the same time, we cannot dismiss or ignore other serious threats to human life and dignity such as racism, the environmental crisis, poverty and the death penalty and I would add the critical issue of immigration. Hopefully, this will give guidance for all pro-lifers as we work together in a closer cooperative effort to overcome the killing of precious unborn children. Life is the most fundamental God-given human right that we all share as human beings, from the moment of fertilization. Once a new human life comes into existence, no one has the right to end that life for any reason. As human beings, we are designed to find our deepest meaning in relationships with others. Life is about loving others and sacrificing for others – family, community, and country – but abortion is a human rights crisis because it is America’s leading cause of bloodshed. Over 2,000 children will die today and every day in America from abortion. This astounding daily mass murdering of weak and helpless pre-born children in our nation is the greatest moral evil in our country. This brutal daily killing of these precious sacred images of God should cause all pro-lifers, especially bishops, to fall on our knees in prayerful repentance and reparation, pleading for God’s forgiveness and mercy as we humbly admit before the Lord that we could have and should do much more to prevent the massive daily destruction of tiny, precious human lives. Laws are meant to protect the weak and the most defenseless members of society. These are the pre-born children who can’t speak or defend themselves. Our nation which is built on our divine given rights, is stripping the most fundamental rights from the weakest members of society. We shepherds must humbly listen to the word of God in the prophet Ezekiel, “to the shepherd, thus says the Lord God; woe to the shepherds – the flock – you did not pasture. You did not strengthen the weak nor heal the sick nor bind up the injured. Because my shepherds did not look after my sheep—my sheep became plunder. Thus says the Lord God, I am coming against these shepherd”.

Born Alive Protection Act

We continue to thank God for the Supreme Court’s decision to overturn Roe v Wade, and now we also give thanks to the Lord that just recently the US House passed the “Born-Alive Abortion Survivors Protection Act” which prohibits a health care practitioner from failing to exercise the proper degree of care in the case of the child who survives a brutal abortion or attempted abortion. In other words, healthcare practitioners are to treat such babies like “any newborn, or any other person who comes to a hospital, clinic or other facilities seeking healthcare”. Now we must pray and work for the senate to approve this life act and to strongly encourage our president to sign it. At the same time, the House condemned the recent attacks on pro-life facilities, groups, and churches.

Sadly, the Biden Administration keeps coming up with new tactics to keep abortion happening. Just six months after the US Supreme Court’s landmark decision that abortion is not a constitutional right, there is now another consequential shift following the USFDA finalization of a rule change that expands availability of the abortion pill Mifepristone. Then the Biden’s justice department has now rewritten the law to approve abortion drugs by mail. Legislatures are now confronting the reality that many, many abortions now result from drugs, rather than surgery. Now, with the rule changes, women seeking abortion no longer require visiting a physical clinic. The frontier on the issue of abortion isn’t necessarily the abortion clinic, it is the mobile phone.

Women seeking abortion by searching online are now able to order abortion pills through the mail. Sadly, already both Walgreens and CVS also plan to offer the abortion Mifepristone in states where it is legal. Now the Office of Legal Counsel states that the law, “does not prohibit the mailing or delivery or receipt by mail, of Mifepristone or Misoprostol where the sender lacks the intent that recipient of the drugs will use them unlawfully. Congress could have enacted a statute saying that, but it didn’t. The new abortion pill rule challenges Catholics to reimagine our effective pro-life outreach. It should inspire us to give community and individual peaceful and prayerful witness against this deadly approval of this pill and the places that sell this deadly drug.

Governments Most Sacred Duty

Our governments most sacred duty is to safeguard the lives of all Americans beginning with the most vulnerable and weakest, the unborn child. As we deal with these new attacks on the unborn, we Catholics must strongly, publicly preach and teach our biblical belief confirmed by clear scientific evidence that the unborn are human beings entitled to all the protections of life, liberty, property, and health guaranteed by the 14th Amendment. We bishops and all pro-lifers must follow and give greater witness to the pro-life teaching of the many strong statements of both St. Pope John Paul II and Pope Francis who have clearly stated, we must have a great love and support with all our means for each new child of God and their mothers and fathers. Both Popes have clearly stated that abortion is murder. For some, these words may be shocking, but they are based on the clear truth of the revealed word of God and confirmed by scientific fact about the personhood of the unborn.

More than ever, we need to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to help us live each day the gospel, principles and values of Jesus supported by his and our dear mother Mary who simply tells us, “Do whatever He tells you”. We constantly encourage our president and congressional leaders to show more concern for all women who are struggling with a pregnancy issue. Pope Francis stresses the closeness, the compassion, and tenderness we must have in all our parishes for all pregnant women and all those considering an abortion decision and offer them spiritual, human, emotional, health, legal and financial means to assist them with their many needs and to encourage them to save their babies. And we must work without elected officials to provide the proper aid to cover the cost of the birth and the early and ongoing care and education of their children. God created the human person in the divine image and likeness as the pinnacle of all creation. Each of us including the unborn share in the image of God’s glory. Human life as a gift from God is sacred and inviolable.