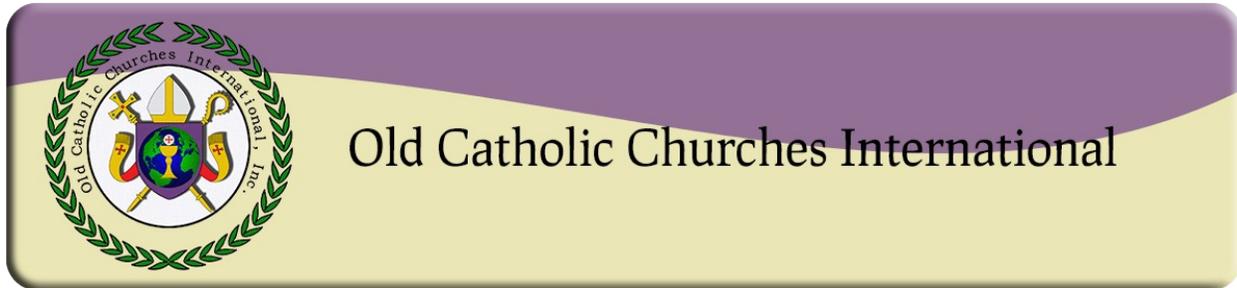


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June 24, 2022
Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Statement on the Supreme Court Decision striking down Roe v. Wade

Summary

The Old Catholic Churches International supports a woman's right to make medical decisions for themselves. While we are certainly pro-life, that stance also extends to the mother, the child, the improvised, the inmate on death row, and weak and vulnerable. We do not condemn those who have had to make terribly difficult decisions for a myriad of circumstances under stresses we could never fathom. Abortion is not an easy decision, nor is it a simple equation to master. We will love and support all who need us regardless of any limiting factor, including abortion.

Full Text

Today, on this Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus which teaches us about the love and compassion of our Lord, the Supreme Court of the United States released its ruling on the constitutionality of Roe v. Wade. Their ruling was without the love and compassion that Christianity teaches us despite many of the justices claiming to be guided by Christian principles.

Our jurisdiction has long held that a person has an inherent dignity to care for one's self. This means that a person has the right to make any and all medical decisions for oneself. Sadly, the ruling today removes a woman's right to make decisions for herself once pregnant. Instead the courts and legislatures now have the right to decide what is best for the woman and the fetus she carries.

Bishop James St. George, our Chancellor and the pastor of Saint Miriam Parish and Friary in Flourtown, PA, recently wrote "...nowhere did I learn more than in my firsthand the experiences of women who made the decision to abort a pregnancy than in my tenure as a trauma chaplain at some of the nation's largest trauma centers. It was there that I learned there are no easy

118 Frances Drive - North Augusta, South Carolina 29841 - (762) 218-2485
info@myocci.org - <https://www.myocci.org>

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answers and certainly no easy decisions, but God is still God and my job as a priest was - and remains - not to arbitrate grace, but to give it liberally and willingly and in abundance.”

Reflection on many of the stories, reflections, and commentaries on abortion we’ve come to the direct conclusion that there is a conflict in what being pro-life really means. To be truly pro-life, we cannot simply support a child’s right to be born, but also the right of the mother to expect substantial support from her community, her church, and her government (Akin to subsidiarity, cf Rerum Novarum). We must recognize that being pro-life also means that we provide children with quality child care, healthcare, and educational opportunities as well as advancement later in life when they are seeking their own vocations. We can’t be pro-life and be anti-woman simultaneously. We must recognize that organizations like Planned Parenthood do more than offer abortions to women in distress. These organizations provide quality healthcare, diagnostic tools, and ongoing support for prevention of disease - including prevention of pregnancy - to some of the nation’s poorest and most vulnerable populations.

The United States is often left behind in some of the most critical factors that show a true developing democracy and modern society. We fall behind many nations, including in our care for the unborn, but also the neonate, elderly, poor, immigrant, and uninsured. To this day we still maintain a healthy dose of overt racism. These excluded persons must be at the heart of any pro-life movement. It’s actually very simple in the end: When you support the immigrant, you support life. When you support the alien among us, you support life. When you support the newborn, you support life. When you support the child needing care, you support life. When you support economic justice, you support life. When you support the LGBTQIA+ person, you support life. When you support the prisoner and remove capital punishment, you support life. And when you support universal health care rights, you support life.

In 2008, then Presidential Candidate, Hillary Rodham Clinton said, “Abortion should be safe, legal, and rare.” We agree. Bishop St. George reminds us, “I pray every day abortion is needed less as an option, but I’ve learned during my time in healthcare, and now as a parish priest and the leader of a diocese, that it is far more complicated than one single issue. Abortion isn’t an option just to end in “unwanted” life, sometimes abortion is a sad but medically necessary intervention due to incest, rape, or genetic abnormality or defect, because in the end, none of us are willing to be pro-life enough to take in and care for a broken child. And, we have learned that where legal access is denied to these services, as heartbreaking as they are, death increases in all forms of life, including pregnant women. I can’t live with that as a Catholic; neither should you.”

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The Old Catholic Churches International will continue to offer support, love and compassion to all women who have to make difficult medical decisions that are in the best interest of themselves, their health, their psychological well-being, and their families. We will not condemn those who have to make these hard decisions. Furthermore, we will continue to offer them a place of refuge and the graces of the sacraments. Each of us makes decisions daily that others might find distasteful or against their moral code, but what this decision did was impose the morality of judicial body on those in need, facing horrendous circumstances. This is the highest of moral failure.

We call on all lawmakers to ensure equal access to safe reproductive healthcare to all women and to respect all life, not just those who fit within a false narrative to assuage the failings of the court.

Given this Twenty-Fourth day of June in the year of our Lord, Twenty Twenty Two.

Presiding Bishop



Rt. Rev. Gregory W. Godsey, OSFoc



College of Bishops and Vicars

The Right Rev. James St. George, OSFoc
 The Right Rev. David Cronan
 The Right Rev. Benjamin Williams, OSFoc/P
 The Very Rev. Kevin Kinsel, OPoc
 The Very Rev. David Castro, SSI
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