



STATEMENT ON THE 26th ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V. WADE

January 22, 1999

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you . . ."
Jeremiah 1:5

With strengthened resolve and renewed hope we sadly mark the 26th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the United States Supreme Court decision that made abortion legal throughout pregnancy in our country. Though legal, abortion is morally wrong. This is so because every human being is precious and has inherent value from the time of being formed in the womb by God's hand, until taken by natural death. *Roe v. Wade* cannot change this truth. Sadly, however, it has undermined our nation's guarantee to the right to life for all by giving governmental approval to destroy innocent life within the womb.

Roe v. Wade has helped spawn a culture in which an individual's liberty and privacy interests take precedence over another's life. Even the painful, horrifying destruction of an infant partially born is tolerated and defended. As long as society accepts commercial destruction of the youngest and weakest, none are safe; every vulnerable human life becomes susceptible to assault from those who are stronger. The human family will make little progress in dealing morally with nuclear arms, capital punishment, poverty, euthanasia and other attacks on human life and dignity, if we allow the routine destruction of our youngest and most helpless sisters and brothers.

Roe v. Wade will be overturned, and public opinion will reject abortion, only when hearts and minds are touched by truth. Violence, whether against persons who perform abortion or places that provide them, is always wrong and cannot be justified. Nor will such acts turn the tide of abortion. They are condemned by all who are truly pro-life.

The Gospel calls us to reach out to those in most in need: pregnant women, poor children and families, persons who are old, infirm or disabled. We urge all to work for justice and to build a civilization that truly reflects a culture of life and truth.

We ask our people especially to reach out to women facing difficult pregnancies and burdensome decisions. Pray for mothers abandoned by their children's fathers, or encouraged to abort their unborn children by families and friends, that they will find a community of love, a sanctuary for both them and their new lives.

On this sad anniversary, we encourage and give our thanks to all who tirelessly work to promote a culture of life. We pledge continued efforts to touch hearts and persuade minds on this critical matter of life and death. Relying on the spirit of God working in us, we pledge to reach out to those who suffer from painful abortion experiences, to share with them God's love and mercy. And, we pledge our continued defense of the truth that every human life, at every stage of development, is a gift from God.

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