



SOUTH DAKOTA CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

**Statement of the Bishops of South Dakota
on the 49th Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade***

January 22, 2022

Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children

Today is the 49th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, the Supreme Court decision effectively legalizing abortion in all 50 states. This is a day of sorrowful remembrance of all those “holy innocents,” those little ones in the womb, known and loved by God from the moment of their creation, who have been denied the most basic of rights, the right to life. On this day, we also remember mothers who find themselves in situations of fear, loneliness, or doubt. To them, as to all, we long to say, your Father in heaven loves you! And to those who have participated in an abortion in some way, too, we do not hesitate to share that the peace found in God’s love is freely given to all who repent and believe in him.

On this day we affirm, with our brother bishops in the United States, that in our search for justice, “the threat of abortion remains our preeminent priority because it directly attacks life itself, because it takes place within the sanctuary of the family, and because of the number of lives destroyed.”¹ We earnestly pray that this anniversary of *Roe* will be its last. We invite you to join us in praying for the justices of the Supreme Court as they consider a legal challenge to the deeply unjust results of *Roe v. Wade*.² We pray their decision reflects deep respect for the right to life from the moment of conception.

We long for a nation permeated by divine love, in which abortion is not only illegal, but inconceivable. Brothers and sisters, even should *Roe* fall in the year ahead, the battle for life is not over. If *Roe* is finally overturned, we will be called to greater heights of generosity, not less. We urge you, flock of Christ, to have courage and confidence in discerning and responding to this call. God will assuredly provide all that we need. Remember, too, that this battle into which we have all been born is firstly a battle for souls. The evil one seeks to sow division, discord, and suspicion wherever he prowls. We must clothe ourselves in the full armor of God, “draw strength from the Lord and his mighty power,” and take up the arms he gives, the sword of the Spirit.³ In this way we will find joy and generous love to share with all. We entrust ourselves and you to the Mother of God, who points the way to this love.

The Most Reverend Donald E. DeGrood
Bishop of Sioux Falls

The Most Reverend Peter M. Muhich
Bishop of Rapid City

¹ [*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*](#), Introductory Letter.

² A decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health* is expected no later than June 2022.

³ C.f. Ephesians 6: 11-17