



**Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Florida
on the 37th Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*
January 22, 2010**

Approaching the somber anniversary of the United States Supreme Court decision that declared an unborn child has no constitutional protection, we have a glimmer of hope as surveys of the American public indicate the overwhelming majority do not believe in unrestricted access to abortion. Over 80% of those polled in two surveys, one by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the other by the Knights of Columbus, believe abortion should be illegal or significantly restricted.

Reflecting on a 2009 report by the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute that over one billion babies in the womb have died worldwide, averaging one death by abortion for each second of the year, we continue to work and pray for the day when every unborn child will be welcomed. The growing numbers of crisis pregnancy centers, predominately staffed by volunteers, speaks to this vital outreach to pregnant women and their children who need our physical and spiritual support.

We reach out to you, our brothers and sisters, who have participated in an abortion and urge you to come back to full communion with the church. Just as we all seek God's forgiveness for our failures, Project Rachel and Rachel's Vineyard offer hope and healing for those suffering from past life altering decisions.

Our Holy Father, Benedict XVI, continues to speak out about the life of a human person as a gift from God and not a "mere human product". In addressing Brazilian bishops in November, 2009, the Pope explained, "the conviction of right reason and the certainty of faith that the life of the human being, from conception to natural death, belongs to God and not to men, confers on it that sacred character and that personal dignity that arouses only one correct legal and moral attitude, that is, one of profound respect."

In Florida, the rate of abortion has decreased for the second year in a row. We will continue to advocate for legislation that protects life including the requirement for women to view an ultrasound of their baby prior to an abortion and maturity standards for judges hearing a minor's request for a judicial bypass of parental notice for an abortion.

Let us continue to pray unceasingly for the day when *Roe v. Wade* will be overturned and all human life will be protected from the moment of conception.

Archbishop John C. Favalora
Archdiocese of Miami

Bishop Thomas G. Wenski
Diocese of Orlando

Bishop Frank J. Dewane
Diocese of Venice

Bishop Victor Galeone
Diocese of St. Augustine

Bishop John H. Ricard, SSJ
Diocese of Pensacola/Tallahassee

Auxiliary Bishop Felipe J. Estévez
Archdiocese of Miami

Bishop Robert N. Lynch
Diocese of St. Petersburg

Bishop Gerald M. Barbarito
Diocese of Palm Beach

Auxiliary Bishop John G. Noonan
Archdiocese of Miami