



ARCHDIOCESE OF AGANA

CHANCERY OFFICE

196 Cuesta San Ramon Ste. B Hagatna, Guam 96910 Tel: (671) 472-6116, (671) 562-0000 Fax: (671) 477-3519

Dec. 2, 2021

Protocol No. 2021-081

Archbishop's Message
Please pray for U.S. Supreme Court,
protection of the unborn and overturn of Roe vs. Wade

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,

The United States Supreme Court has begun to hear arguments on Wednesday, Dec. 1 (Thursday, Guam time) on a pivotal case which has the potential to overturn Roe vs. Wade, the infamous decision in 1973 that legalized abortion in our nation.

I ask all Catholics in our Archdiocese of Agaña to pray for each of the Supreme Court justices to fully realize that every unborn child in the womb deserves the right to live.

Please pray that the Holy Spirit fills the hearts and minds of these judicial leaders. Pray that they are filled with the wisdom, courage and fortitude to make the only decision that is right: the decision that proclaims that the killing of the smallest among us is never justified. The decision that upholds one of the greatest moral laws of all, our Creator's command, "Thou Shalt Not Kill".

The judicial process will not be an overnight procedure. Even after hearing arguments, deliberation by the justices is expected to span months, well into 2022. That means there is plenty of time for our archdiocese and our pro-life allies in other religious denominations to pray in the varied ways that we know. Pray as individuals, couples, families and groups. Pray in church. Pray in our schools. Pray at work. Pray fervently. Pray often. Prayer is our conversation with God.

The case that the Supreme Court justices have agreed to hear is known as Dobbs vs. Jackson Women's Health Organization and involves a Mississippi law that restricts most

abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy. The Mississippi law challenges two landmark decisions: Roe vs. Wade in 1973 and Planned Parenthood vs. Casey, which upheld Roe in 1992.

How the justices decide on this Mississippi case will have tremendous, historic impact on our nation and could save millions of lives of unborn babies moving forward. A favorable, pro-life ruling would significantly weaken or as mentioned, possibly overturn Roe vs. Wade. It would put more of the responsibility to restrict abortion in the hands of the people, at their individual state levels.

I urge others do what Guam Catholic Pro-Life Committee members already regularly do and hold peaceful prayer rallies and novenas. I ask our priests to include in your Mass intentions, the U.S. Supreme Court and favorable results against abortion. As I said in a letter last September, I recognize that our archdiocese must do much more to address the atrocity of abortion.

Once again, I urge our clergy to more vigorously and frequently speak about the grave evil of abortion at their Masses, gatherings and Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) classes. Teachers in our schools and parishes, please regularly teach the youth about the grave sin of abortion. They will be the adults of tomorrow who can follow through with efforts to end abortion. Plant the seeds now.

Our Lord has entrusted each of us with the gift of life. So dear brothers and sisters, encourage one another to protect this treasure. Listen and counsel – with love -- those who disagree, are unsure or who are lukewarm.

Finally, as we lift our voices to our Lord, please include in your prayers, women and girls who have had abortions or are thinking of aborting their babies. They need our love. In speaking strongly about respecting the lives and dignity of our innocent unborn babies, please also extend that same respect to all others. Those who might oppose, infuriate or offend us, they too deserve dignity and kindness.

Finally, our Archdiocese of Agaña is in the beautiful season of Advent whereby we await the coming of our Savior, both in the anniversary of his birth on Christmas and his second coming at the end of time. Our waiting is not meant to be an idle time or a period of passivity however.

Rather, we are called to be alert and ready, lest we are overcome by the distractions, trappings and anxieties of the secular world.

In their website at usccb.org, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops remind us, “Advent also includes an element of penance in the sense of preparing, quieting, and disciplining our hearts for the full joy of Christmas.”

At his Sunday Angelus address on the First Sunday of Advent on Nov. 28, Pope Francis said “the secret of being vigilant is prayer ... which keeps the lamp of the heart lit.” During Advent, Christmas and all the days of our lives, let us become much more vigilant in the fight against abortion. Each child in the womb deserves that from us.

Yours in Jesus Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Byrnes". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

Michael J. Byrnes, S.T.D.
Archbishop of Agaña