



**Statement
of the
Committee for Pro-Life Affairs
National Conference of Catholic Bishops
*January 24, 1973***

The sweeping judgment of the U.S. Supreme Court in the Texas and Georgia abortion cases is a flagrant rejection of the unborn child's right to life. The Court has chosen to ignore the scientific evidence regarding the unborn child's human growth and development during the first six months of life in the womb of its mother. No consideration has been given to the parental rights of the child's father.

In effect, the opinion of the Court has established that abortion-on-request is the public policy of this nation.

Despite attempts to do so, the Court has failed to justify its opinion on theological, historical or scientific grounds. Nonetheless, during the first six month of the child's life, the Court has made the doctor the final judge as to who will live and who will die. This seems to reverse the history of American jurisprudence that prohibits the deprivation of the right to life without due process of law. Never before has a humane society placed such absolute and unrestricted power in the hands of an individual.

Although as a result of the Court decision abortion may be legally permissible, it is still morally wrong, and no Court opinion can change the law of God prohibiting the taking of innocent human life. Therefore, as religious leaders, we cannot accept the Court's judgment and we urge people not to follow its reasoning or conclusions.

Meeting as the Bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Affairs, we have formulated the following recommendations:

1. Every legal possibility must be explored to challenge the opinion of the United States Supreme Court decision that withdraws all legal safeguards for the right to life of the unborn child.

2. We urge all State legislatures to protect the unborn child to the fullest extent possible under this decision and to restrict the practice of abortion as much as they can.

3. The Catholic Church pledges all its educational and informational resources to a program that will present the case for the sanctity of the child's life from conception to birth. This will include the scientific information on the humanity of the unborn child and the progress of human growth and development of the unborn child, the responsibility and necessity for society to safeguard the life of the child at every stage of its existence, the problems that may exist for a woman during pregnancy and more humane and morally acceptable solutions to these problems.

4. Hospitals and health facilities under Catholic auspices will not find this judgment of the Court compatible with their faith and moral convictions. We feel confident that the hospitals will do all in their power to be the type of institution where good morals and good medicine will be practiced. We are also confident that our hospitals and health care personnel will be identified by a dedication to the sanctity of life, and by an acceptance of their conscientious responsibility to protect the lives of both mother and child. We strongly urge our doctors, nurses and health care personnel to stand fast in refusing to provide abortion on request, and in refusing to accept easily available abortion as justifiable medical care.

In conclusion, we are saying that the Court has written a charter for abortion on request, and has thereby deprived the unborn child of his or her human rights. This is bad morality, bad medicine and bad public policy, and it cannot be harmonized with basic moral principles. We also believe that millions of our fellow Americans will share our reactions to this opinion. We have no choice but to urge that the Court's judgment be opposed and rejected.

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