



Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

NEWS RELEASE

TO: Diocesan Pro-Life Directors, State Catholic Conference Directors

FROM: USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

DATE: June 29, 2023

RE: U.S. Bishops President and Chairmen Rebuke Distortion of Church Teaching in Abortion Statement by Members of Congress

WASHINGTON - On June 24, the one-year anniversary of the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, thirty-one Catholic members of Congress authored a public statement of principles, falsely invoking specific teachings of the Catholic Church to defend their support of a legal right to abortion. Archbishop Timothy P. Broglio of the Archdiocese for the Military Services, USA, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), Bishop Michael F. Burbidge of Arlington, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Pro-Life Activities, and Bishop Daniel E. Flores of Brownsville, chairman of the USCCB's Committee on Doctrine, issued the following corrective statement in response:

“Members of Congress who recently invoked teachings of the Catholic faith itself as justifying abortion or supporting a supposed right to abortion grievously distort the faith. It is wrong and incoherent to claim that the taking of innocent human life at its most vulnerable stage can ever be consistent with the values of supporting the dignity and wellbeing of those in need. ‘Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception,’ including through the civil law [[Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), 2270, 2273]. Abortion violates this with respect to preborn children and brings untold suffering to countless women.

“Conscience rightly enjoys a special regard both in Church teaching and in the public sphere. And policymakers should support the freedom of Catholics and of others to serve the common good in accord with their beliefs in a wide range of areas – from services and assistance to recently arrived migrants, to offering health care and social services.

“Nevertheless, conscience is not a license to commit evil and take innocent lives. Conscience cannot and does not justify the act or support of abortion. In fact, conscience ‘must be informed and moral judgment enlightened’ with the Word of God in faith and prayer, and ‘guided by the authoritative teaching of the Church’ [CCC 1783, 1785]. Moreover, the reality that the preborn are our living sisters and brothers is not only a matter of faith, but is attested to by science and sound reason.

“We once again implore and pray for Congress to join us in working toward the true common good by prioritizing authentic, uplifting support for the vulnerable and marginalized, including mothers and families in need.”

Bishop Burbidge’s statement as pro-life committee chairman marking the anniversary of the *Dobbs* decision was released earlier this month and may be read [here](#).

Media Contact:
[Chieko Noguchi](#)
202-541-3200
