



The Catholic Diocese of Jackson

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•
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The Catholic Diocese of Biloxi

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Statement from Bishop Joseph R. Kopacz and Bishop Louis F. Kihneman on Supreme Court's Ruling in Dobbs. v. Jackson Women's Health Organization

Today, Lady Justice has turned her attention to the cry of the unborn child hidden in the refuge of his or her mother's womb. Today, justice has not abandoned that unborn child and his or her capacity to feel pain, but there is still more work to be done.

Together with many throughout our country, we join in prayer that states are now able to protect women and children from the injustice of abortion. The Catholic Church has had a vested interest in this matter – the dignity and sanctity of all human life.

The church has a long history of service to those who are most vulnerable and remains the largest private provider of social services in the United States. Through its charity agencies, and the independent efforts of its members, the Catholic Church is supporting all women in addition to the child in the womb.

The church will continue to accompany women and couples who are facing difficult or unexpected pregnancies and during the early years of parenthood, through initiatives such as Walking with Moms in Need.

With our brother bishops, we renew our commitment to preserving the dignity and sanctity of all human life by:

- Ensuring our Catholic parishes are places of welcome for women facing challenging pregnancies or who find it difficult to care for their children after birth, so that any mother needing assistance will receive life-affirming support and be connected to appropriate programs and resources where she can get help.
- Helping fellow Catholics recognize the needs of pregnant and parenting moms in their communities, enabling parishioners to know these mothers, to listen to them and to help them obtain the necessities of life for their families.
- Being witnesses of love and life by expanding and improving the extensive network of comprehensive care including pregnancy help centers, and Catholic health care and social service agencies.
- Increasing our advocacy for laws that ensure the right to life for the unborn and that no mother or family lacks the basic resources needed to care for their children, regardless of race, age, immigration status or any other factor.

- Continuing to support and advocate for public policies and programs directed toward building up the common good and fostering integral human development, with a special concern for the needs of low-income families and immigrants.¹

In all of these ways and more, the Catholic Church witnesses to the sanctity of human life, from conception to natural death, and continues to work to build a culture of life in our nation.

Our respective dioceses continue to collaborate with organizations such as HerPlan, Pro-Life Mississippi and many others to bring vital services to support mothers and the unborn.

The community can immediately accompany women and couples who are facing difficult or unexpected pregnancies through the Walking with Moms in Need initiative in the Diocese of Jackson. For more information on how to get involved or offer support to women in need, please contact the Office of Family Ministry coordinator in the Diocese of Jackson at charlene.bearden@jacksondiocese.org. In the Diocese of Biloxi, contact Deacon Jim Gunkel, director of the Office of Family Ministry and Family Life at jgunkel@biloxidiocese.org or Margaret Miller, coordinator of Walking with Moms at mrmiller@biloxidiocese.org.

Additionally, there are Catholic Charities Community Outreach Centers located in the Diocese of Biloxi in Gulfport, Hattiesburg, Waveland and Pascagoula. These centers provide confidential pregnancy testing; Medicaid pregnancy confirmations; life-affirming options counseling; case management (including budgeting and goal setting); basic needs assistance; car seats and safe sleeping spaces for infants; diapers formula, clothing, blankets, socks, etc.; and representative payee services. The Diocese of Biloxi is also sharing the pro-life message through its Pro-Life Billboard initiative.

The Diocese of Biloxi will also be resuming adoptions and foster parenting services in the near future, complementing existing programs in the Diocese of Jackson that have provided those services through Catholic Charities, Inc. for over a half century.

Again, we are grateful for the Supreme Court's decision but are also mindful that the battle to uphold the sanctity of life is an ongoing effort. Let us pray and continue to raise our voices both in our churches and in our communities in defense of human dignity and justice.

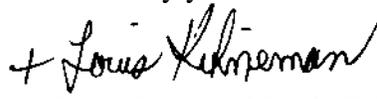
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Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Joseph R. Kopacz
Bishop of Jackson

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Louis F. Kihneman, III
Bishop of Biloxi

¹ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "Statement of USCCB President and Bishop Chairmen in Advance of Supreme Court's Ruling in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization," March 21, 2022, <https://www.usccb.org/news/2022/statement-usccb-president-and-bishop-chairmen-advance-supreme-courts-ruling-dobbs-v>