

San Antonio March for Life

January 21, 2023

Good afternoon.

Looking back into my notes from 2022 in preparation for today, I realized that a year ago, I began my participation in this March and Rally for Life by reflecting on how “we are called to pray for the protection of unborn children without ceasing.”

Today, I am thrilled to say that this year our prayers for life have been answered in an undoubtful and consequential way.

On June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court’s decision in Dobbs vs. Jackson Women’s Health Organization ended the nationwide reign of abortion on demand that Roe introduced back in 1973.

That day, the Court established that there is nothing in the Constitution’s text, history, American legal tradition, or the Court’s precedents that prevents the government from protecting unborn children from abortion.

By returning the issue of abortion to our federal and state representatives, the Court opened a new era which now known as the post-Roe America.

As we all know, this historic decision does not mean that our work defending and promoting the life of the unborn is done. On the contrary.

Abortion is legal in more states than not, and even in states such as Texas where it is prohibited, the need to permanently advocate in favor of life and on behalf of women and men facing unexpected or difficult pregnancies remains.

The need to pray for the millions of babies and families affected by abortion throughout the past five decades remains too.

As you have heard me say before, this work needs to be “clear, firm and passionate” (*Gaudete et exsultate*, n. 101), but it also needs to be deeply joyful and humane.

Only love “is capable of building a new world” (*Fratelli Tutti*, n. 183); and build a new world we must. A world in which all unborn children are protected by law and in which all mothers and fathers in need know that they are not alone. A world in which abortion is unthinkable because communities are united at the service of those who need spiritual and material help in order to embrace life.

In the words of Pope Francis, “Today we have a great opportunity to express our innate sense of fraternity, to be Good Samaritans who

bear the pain of other people's troubles rather than fomenting greater hatred and resentment." (*Fratelli Tutti*, n. 77)

May God assist us in the effort to transform this opportunity into a tangible reality.

May he guide our efforts to transform our communities into "islands of mercy in a sea of indifference" (Pope Francis), so that no mother or father should feel that they are trapped, and that abortion is their only option.

May he grant us the grace to become a true "people of life and for life", thankful for the gifts we have received and committed to making them flourish for the benefit of all.

And may together we offer the world, as St. John Paul II liked to say, "new signs of hope" as we "work to ensure that justice and solidarity will increase and that a new culture of human life will be affirmed, for the building of an authentic civilization of truth and love." (*Evangelium Vitae*, n. 6)

Thank you very much.