



January 24, 2023

Supporting Life and Justice for the Common Good in Washington State

The Catholic Church has a history of social teaching that goes back centuries and provides a compelling challenge for living responsibly and building a just society. Based on our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, our Church proclaims that human life is sacred, and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. This belief is the foundation of all the principles of our social teachings. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

The human person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society in economics, law, and politics directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. Clearly stated, as Catholics we believe in the inviolate dignity of the human person from conception to natural death.

Abortion remains legal in Washington state, even after the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*. Nonetheless, efforts are underway in our state to pass an extreme constitutional amendment that would go far beyond *Roe v. Wade* and exceed what voters have approved in our state. Instead of the current state law (as approved by voters) allowing abortions only until the point of viability, Senate Joint Resolution 8202 and House Joint Resolution 4201 are attempting to enshrine in the state constitution the "right" for an abortion to be performed at any point up to birth. This extreme proposal ignores the "right" to life of an unborn baby and should be rejected by the legislature.

In light of this, it is important to note that our call as Catholics requires us to be involved in promoting public policy for the common good. This is one of those important moments that requires our action and involvement. As an element of our faith in Jesus Christ, our teaching tells us that "... in the Catholic tradition, responsible citizenship is a virtue; and participation in the political process is a moral obligation." (*Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, USCCB)

In addition, the Catholic Church in Washington does not only profess our belief in supporting life and the dignity of the human person – we take action. Through our Catholic Charities Pregnancy and Parenting Support (PREPARES) program, we offer women, children and families support services that enable them to raise their children, and access important social services for the first five years of the child's life.

As Catholics we must take this opportunity to speak up for the unborn and in support of life. We must state what we believe is the heart of God on behalf of those who cannot defend

themselves. Therefore, it is our moral obligation and our duty to vote our consciences on this amendment when the opportunity presents itself. We must also contact the governor and respective state representatives to let them know our supportive position on life and why this issue is so important to our society, state, and culture.

Pope St. John Paul II wrote, “Disregard for the right to life, precisely because it leads to the killing of the person whom society exists to serve, is what most directly conflicts with the possibility of achieving the common good. ... Abortion and euthanasia are thus crimes which no human law can claim to legitimize.” (*Evangelium Vitae*)

Pope Francis further states, “It is troubling to see how simple and convenient it has become for some to deny the existence of a human life as a solution to problems that can and must be solved for both the mother and her unborn child.” (Speech to the United Nations, September 25, 2020)

Also, in the encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, Pope St. John Paul II wrote, “But responsibility likewise falls on the legislators who have promoted and approved abortion laws, and, to the extent that they have a say in the matter, on the administrators of the health-care centers where abortions are performed. In this sense abortion goes beyond the responsibility of individuals and beyond the harm done to them and takes on a distinctly social dimension. It is a most serious *wound* inflicted on society and its culture by the very people who ought to be society’s promoters and defenders.”

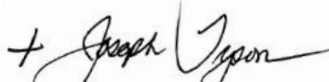
According to the State Department of Health, of nearly 100,000 pregnancies in Washington in 2020, there were just over 16,000 abortions. We must act on behalf of these lives being lost.

We call on Catholics and people of good will everywhere to continue their efforts to be involved in the political process to promote laws and policies supporting life, liberty, and justice for the common good. This is our Christian calling and responsibility.

In the heart of Christ,



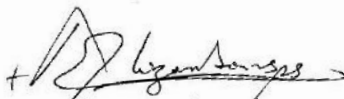
Most Rev. Paul D. Etienne
Archbishop of Seattle



Most Rev. Joseph J. Tyson
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Most Rev. Thomas A. Daly
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