

**National Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn
Children and the 46th Anniversary of the United States
Supreme Court Decision Roe v. Wade**

Bishop Barres' January 22, 2019 Homily

St. Agnes Cathedral, Diocese of Rockville Centre, NY

Today, January 22, 2019, we, as Catholics, engage in a National Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children and we commemorate the 46th Anniversary of the tragic United States Supreme Court Decision Roe v. Wade.

We pray at Mass today with our Catholic Faith Network Audience and with people all around our nation for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and we engage in penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion.

I invite Catholics across Long Island and across our country to pray the Rosary today for all those who are healing from the abortion experience, all those involved in Project Rachel, the work of our Catholic Charities Regina Residence, our Catholic Health Services of Long Island and all those who work for and teach the Gospel of Life.

Last Friday, so many people from the Diocese of Rockville Centre came to the annual March for Life in Washington DC. All of our Catholic High Schools brought students and many public school and home school students were present as well.

It is inspirational to see so many of our young people embrace the Gospel of Life as a key cornerstone and foundation of their philosophy of life. The hope that Jesus brings them in their Catholic faith is the anchor of their soul and

the anchor of their public witness. They express their commitment with great spirit, great poise, great courage and great creativity.

These young people – future doctors, lawyers, nurses, politicians, educators, financiers, marketers, social media and communication experts, priests, religious – are and will be articulate spokes people in the public square for the Gospel of human life.

We ended the March with so many of our young people praying in front of the Blessed Sacrament at St. Joseph’s parish on Capitol Hill in Washington DC. I asked them to pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament the beautiful prayer from the Book of Samuel: “Speak Lord, your servant is listening...Speak Lord, your servant is listening.”

They had just finished the March. They had seen a variety of young people from all over the country witnessing the same way they were.

It made sense that they have this moment with Jesus and say to Him: “Speak Lord, your servant is listening.” This is a prayer that will always open them to witness to the Gospel of Life in every setting and season of their life.

I also pointed them to a statue within St. Joseph’s parish on Capitol Hill – a parish situated close to the Capitol Building and the Senate Buildings.

It is the statue of St. Thomas More, Patron of Statesmen, Politicians, and Lawyers (which would include, of course, all Supreme Court Justices and all Senators and Representatives in the U.S. Congress).

We asked the intercession of this great saint for all Statesmen, Politicians and Lawyers that they may in all their deliberations, discussions and decisions defend and promote the sanctity of human life at every stage of life since the sanctity of human life is the foundation of every other human right.

We also pray in solidarity today with all our World Youth Day pilgrims who are in Panama today witnessing to the Splendor of Truth globally with Bishop Robert Brennan.

In a special way, we go to St. Thomas More today in New York State on behalf of our Governor and all our legislators who seem prepared to pass a very tragic expansion of our state’s already radically permissive abortion law.

Let me read to you in full the Statement from the Bishops of New York State:

A Statement from the Catholic Bishops of New York State

Words are insufficient to describe the profound sadness we feel at the contemplated passage of New York State's new proposed abortion policy. We mourn the unborn infants who will lose their lives, and the many mothers and fathers who will suffer remorse and heartbreak as a result.

The so-called 'Reproductive Health Act' will expand our state's already radically permissive law, by empowering more health practitioners to provide abortion and removing all state restrictions on late-term procedures. With an abortion rate that is already double the national average, New York law is moving in the wrong direction.

We renew our pledge to offer the resources and services of our charitable agencies and health services to any woman experiencing an unplanned pregnancy, to support her in bearing her infant, raising her family or placing her child for adoption. There are life-affirming choices available, and we aim to make them more widely known and accessible.

Our Governor and legislative leaders hail this new abortion law as progress. This is not progress. Progress will be achieved when our laws and our culture once again value and respect each unrepeatable gift of human life, from the first moment of creation to natural death. Would that not make us truly the most enlightened and progressive state in the nation?

I am grateful for this Statement that I signed as a Bishop of New York State and the Bishop of the Diocese of Rockville Centre.

But it is so important at this critical moment that all lay Catholics stand up in prayer and stand up in every dimension of the public square for the sanctity of human life.

Thank you all for your courageous and consistent witness.

Mary, Queen of Peace and Queen of Life, pray for us!

St. Thomas More, Patron of Statesmen, Politicians and Lawyers, pray for us!

St. John Paul II, Courageous Advocate of the Culture of Life, pray for us!

St. Teresa of Calcutta, pray for us!

St. Gianna, pray for us!