



THE DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

Office of Human Life, Family and Bioethics



Highlights of this newsletter:

- ❖ [The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and *Dobbs v. Jackson*](#)
- ❖ [Making a Difference in a Post-Roe World](#)
- ❖ [News in Our Office](#)
- ❖ [Pray without Ceasing](#)

June 2022

Dear Friends for Life,

THE MOST SACRED HEART OF JESUS AND *DOBBS V. JACKSON*



June is the month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, depicted in images to be on fire because, as He described in visions to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690), His divine Heart is so inflamed with love for humanity. At the same time, the crown of thorns which encircles the Sacred Heart symbolizes the sinfulness and ingratitude of mankind.¹

Indeed, June 2022 has been both thorny and fiery. Since the *Dobbs* decision leak, violent strikes on pregnancy help centers, vandalism of Catholic churches, vitriolic protests with wild misrepresentations of (scientific, medical and legal) facts, intimidation efforts at Supreme Court justices' homes and even an assassination attempt—have occurred with the intent to derail and demoralize those whose work has been at odds with the egregiously wrongly decided *Roe v. Wade*. Not only are these despicable attacks of hatred in and of themselves wrong, but they all originate from a most basic rejection of the sacredness and inviolability of each innocent human life created by God in His image.

Compounding these events, we witnessed outrageous attacks on the sanctity of marriage, vile distortions of the inherent beauty of our God-given sexuality, and depraved corruption of the innocence of children during this month of so-called “Pride.” Legislatively, in New York, we saw the passage of “Abortion Sanctuary” bills which will promote abortion tourism and protect doctors performing abortions, the Pregnancy Center study bill intended to cripple pregnancy help centers, and even the human composting bill which offends the respect due to the deceased human body. Thorny times indeed!

And yet, the flames of His Sacred Heart burned ever more brightly in this month of June, sustaining our hope during these dark times. Finally, after five decades of prayer, fasting and witness, on June 24, 2022, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, *Roe v. Wade* was overturned! Truth triumphed. We cannot recover the damage of more than 60 million preborn lives lost nor the effects of this unfathomable tragedy on women, families and our society. And we know, as well, that the slaughter of innocent human life in the womb has not ended in many states, including New York. But there is good reason for us to rejoice. Now that the record is corrected—that there is no constitutional right to abortion—the abortion issue will go back to the states for the people to decide. This means the abortion debate is no longer on the margins (that is, attempting to legislate incremental limits on a

¹ [St. Margaret Mary Alacoque | Sacred Heart Apostolate, Inc.](#)

counterfeit right), but rather, it is at the core of the issue: when does life begin and do we want to protect it? I strongly encourage you to read Bishop Barres' pastoral letter, "*Quo Vadis, America?*" in which this is explained.²

For the faithful, it is then no coincidence that this landmark decision was announced on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (June 24th this year). But also full with meaning, the feast of the nativity of St. John the Baptist (who came to prepare the way of the Lord), was moved a day earlier this year (June 23rd) to make way for the Feast of the Lord. And then, as if all of Heaven were celebrating with us this victory on earth, we marked (on June 25th) the feast day of the Immaculate Heart of Mary whose heart so perfectly models the way we should love God Who is at the center of all of this.³ We must keep in perspective that we are merely the instruments of His handiwork including this watershed moment. But could it not be a Divine wink of encouragement for our tireless human labors and sacrifices to defend and protect the sanctity of life, that the *Dobbs* decision was announced on what would have been the 98th birthday of Nellie Gray?⁴

I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing. --Luke 12:49

So, let us be purified by His burning love for all humanity, and as we go forward in a post-*Roe* world, let us "participate in the debate in the public square and to help our fellow citizens understand that now there are only two ways that lie before us"—one is life, and the other death.⁵ Jesus told us there would be division (cf Luke 12:51-53). Be not afraid to proclaim the Truth—choose life!

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN A POST-*ROE* WORLD

Bishop Barres, in a statement issued immediately after the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision was announced, stated, "The Catholic Church stands with expectant mothers in need. We will help meet their physical, material, emotional, and spiritual needs, not just before and at birth, but into infancy and beyond."⁶ In the coming weeks and months, we will be sharing with you both old and new ways we can help these mothers in need choose life here in the Diocese of Rockville Centre. Ultimately, we hope and pray that no woman will feel pressured to have an abortion—because it is always the wrong choice and because we have supports to help. But meeting these direct needs is only one part of changing our culture to be one that embraces life.

In his pastoral letter, "*Quo Vadis, America?*" Bishop Barres reminds us also that the battleground of abortion in the post-*Roe* world has changed. The fight to defend life will no longer be on the steps of the Supreme Court, but at the local level: our villages, towns, city and state capitals—and even more importantly in our homes, schools, and communities where our witness will be twofold: not only in bringing forth the message of life, but also in raising a new generation to continue this work.

The commitment to spreading the Gospel of Life means we must work to defend and promote life in its most vulnerable stages. It can take many forms. For example, consider joining your parish Respect Life group, organizing a Baby Shower or Diaper Drive, and/or participating in a local 40 Days For Life campaign. There are plenty of ways you can make a difference. But most importantly, do it with great charity, so that the appeal of your joy may persuade others to join this growing movement.

Moreover, we must take these principles to the voting booth and encourage others to vote for life-affirming candidates because views on life matter in every branch and every level of government. The consequences are real and they can change the world, in time, to be a place where our laws, programs and institutional structures value all human life, not just those lives that don't get in the way.

² [Quo Vadis, America? Dobbs-Pastoral-Letter-6-24-2022-3.pdf \(drvc.org\)](#)

³ [The Immaculate Heart of Mary \(catholicnewsagency.com\)](#)

⁴ [Nellie Gray, one of the founders of the March for Life, committed the latter part of her life to overturning Roe v. Wade. See Office of Human Life Family and Bioethics Newsletter of January 2021.](#)

[Nellie Gray, Anti-Abortion Activist, Dies at 88 - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

⁵ [Quo Vadis, America? Dobbs-Pastoral-Letter-6-24-2022-3.pdf \(drvc.org\)](#)

⁶ [FINAL Bishop Barres Dobbs v Jackson Statement.pdf \(drvc.org\)](#)

We cannot be afraid to discuss and debate in a respectful and informed manner, tactfully dispelling the moral relativism that has invaded our culture today. Moral truth is absolute and it will set you free. So be not afraid. Check out the newest resources available as we continue to build up our website or review the latest postings at the National Catholic Bioethics Center (www.ncbcenter.org). Consider attending the Bioethics seminar in the Fall. There are many opportunities to strengthen your knowledge and debate skills.

And finally, we must pray. In response to the anger and threats provoked by the *Dobbs* leak, we increased the frequency of our Rosary for Life from monthly to weekly. Now, with the newest wave of hostility and threats again any pro-life person or entity (and the daunting challenges in front of us), we have decided to continue this into the future. Please consider joining us on Friday afternoons at 3:00 p.m. by Zoom. You can find the link on our website, or you can call in to participate if that is more comfortable for you.

NEWS IN OUR OFFICE

June has been a very busy month, but one with many opportunities to give glory to God and promote a civilization of love of life. You can read more in the rest of the newsletter, but briefly, these are some highlights:

With all of the discussion around *Dobbs* and *Roe*, we know old wounds from a past abortion are prone to re-surface. The Project Rachel post-abortion healing ministry is here to help anyone who regrets a past abortion(s). The love of Christ knows no limit for those who repent and seek His Mercy. Please contact Donna Crean in our office—she brings extensive experience, compassion and skill to this most important ministry.

We continue to update our website, www.drvc.life. We have new resources on fatherhood in honor of Father's Day. In addition, we are updating our *Dobbs v. Jackson* resources page, in particular the pregnancy care resources.

A new and very important addition to our website addresses the topics of Same Sex Attraction and Gender Identity Discordance. You will find educational resources and local Diocesan support options intended to educate, form, and transform all Catholics seeking clarity, direction, and pastoral care connected to these issues. Catholic Teaching loves and embraces *all* persons as beloved sons and daughters of God respecting the personal dignity of each person. As in all areas connected to human sexuality, the Catholic Faith centers on doing justice to the human person and enabling each person to authentically flourish in freedom according to God's loving plan. Go here for more information:

- Educational Resources: <https://drvc.life/ssa-gender/>
- Support & Services: <https://drvc.life/ssa-gender-resources/>
- An invaluable resource is the Courage/EnCourage Apostolate with a local chapter here in the Diocese of Rockville Centre. In a brief introductory video, Fr. Phillip Bochanski, Director of Courage International, explains the power and beauty of this ministry. The video features commentary from Bishops, as well as from some Courage and EnCourage members. View it [here](https://vimeo.com/204963997) (<https://vimeo.com/204963997>)

You can find more information about Courage/EnCourage here:

- <https://couragerc.org/faqs/>
- <https://couragerc.org/about/>

Also, registration for the [Annual Courage/EnCourage Conference](#) is open until July 17.

PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

Although we have a busy month behind us, the future promises to keep us hard at work. Underpinning all our efforts is a deep sense of the foundational importance of prayer, but that is not all. We know every victory is of

God and for His Kingdom. We are grateful. As we look to the future, we know we must be more like St. John the Baptist:

“He must increase; I must decrease.” – John 3:30

Pray unceasingly, in your word and your deeds! And perhaps, you might consider completing the First Friday devotions⁷ made widespread by St. Mary Alacoque and/or joining us for the Rosary for Life on Friday at 3:00 p.m.

Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus⁸

*O most holy heart of Jesus, fountain of every blessing,
I adore you, I love you, and with lively sorrow for my sins
I offer you this poor heart of mine.
Make me humble, patient, pure and wholly obedient to your will.
Grant, Good Jesus, that I may live in you and for you.
Protect me in the midst of danger.
Comfort me in my afflictions.
Give me health of body, assistance in my temporal needs,
your blessing on all that I do, and the grace of a holy death.
Amen.*

Sincerely in Christ,

Lisa A. Honkanen, M.D.

⁷ [First Friday Devotion \(catholicnewsagency.com\)](http://catholicnewsagency.com)

⁸ [Prayer to the Sacred Heart of Jesus - Prayers - Catholic Online](#)