



Statement by Bishop Oscar Cantú on U.S. Supreme Court ruling on *Dobbs Vs. Jackson Women's Health Organization*

June 24, 2022

Laws should reflect the values of society. We recognize that in a pluralistic society, there are several value systems. Yet, the Catholic Church wishes to uphold the protection of the most vulnerable, especially women in vulnerable situations and children, including those in the womb, as a fundamental human right for all. Therefore, the Church advocates for just laws that defend the vulnerable and for a culture that respects human life, from conception to natural death.

Thus, we welcome the Supreme Court's decision in *Dobb's v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, which has affirmed our dearly held belief that life is precious, valuable, and should be protected and that states have a compelling interest to protect the unborn and limit abortion.

While we celebrate this decision in many ways, our work has just begun.

For decades, the Catholic Church in California has supported women, children, and families – walking hand in hand with those in crisis pregnancies, supporting families by providing maternity services, parenting supplies and resources, housing assistance, mental health support, and advocating for increased social services.

From this experience of holding the hands of those struggling with the decision to have an abortion, we know that for many women, abortion is not a choice they *want* to make but rather a choice they feel they *have to* make. From our work with mothers and families, we know they don't *need* expanded abortion services. They need housing assistance, prenatal and postpartum care, protection from domestic violence, paid family leave, and maternity accommodations from employers. With rising inflation and soaring housing and healthcare costs, California is not an easy place to raise a child. **We, the Church, pledge to expand access to life-affirming services that empower women in our state with the confidence that they won't walk through pregnancy or parenting alone.**

The California Catholic Conference is fervently committed to ensuring women in California know they are supported and that there are options when facing an unplanned pregnancy. **We challenge lawmakers to provide equitable assistance and commit new funding and resources for maternity and childcare.** California needs to be a sanctuary for women, children, and families struggling to thrive in our state over those seeking abortions.

As we seek to contain the expansion of abortion in California and work to defeat the efforts of state leaders to enshrine abortion into the state constitution permanently, my brother bishops and I ask that all Catholics throughout the state meet this moment and actively engage through the California Catholic Conference, in their dioceses and parishes, and in their communities to help women, children, and families. It is not enough to claim we are for life; we must be the hands and feet of Christ working to make it a reality.

And while the Supreme Court's decision will save the countless lives, we look to increase our work to support California's women, children, and families and protect the sanctity of every human life.