



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

January 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we approach the Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children (January 23), it is important for us to consider its purpose and background, especially at this moment in our nation's history. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* states, "In all the Dioceses of the United States of America, January 22 (or January 23, when January 22 falls on a Sunday) shall be observed as a particular day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion."¹ Providing context for this prayerful observance, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops writes,

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court legalized abortion throughout the United States in its companion decisions *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*. Since that time, millions of children have lost their lives, and millions of women and families have been wounded by abortion.

On June 24, 2022, the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision overturned *Roe v. Wade*, and we praise God for the great opportunity state and federal legislators now have to protect pre-born children. While God, in His mercy, ended the nearly fifty-year nationwide regime of abortion on demand, right now state and federal laws, in many instances, are still hostile to pre-born children. So, great prayer and advocacy is very needed.²

And so it is in the State of New Hampshire with its permissive laws regarding elective abortion. *Roe* has been overturned, but many of its effects remain.

Pope Francis recently taught, "[I]n his preaching Jesus insists a great deal on the fact that the good disciple is vigilant, does not slumber, does not let himself become too self-assured when things go well, but remains alert and ready to do his duty. ... Very often, perhaps, the Lord has given so many graces, many graces, and in the end, we are unable to persevere in this grace and we lose everything, because we lack vigilance..."³ Applied to the present matter, the Holy

¹ *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, no. 373, quoted in "January 22: Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children," United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, <https://www.usccb.org/committees/pro-life-activities/january-roe-events/january-22-day-of-prayer> .

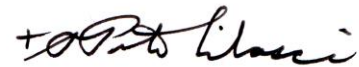
² *Ibid.*

³ Pope Francis, General Audience, December 14, 2022, <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2022/documents/20221214-udienza-generale.html> .

Father's caution reinforces what was said above. We recognize our call to respond well to the grace of God in the wake of the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* and know that we must remain vigilant for the pro-life cause.

We have an opportunity not seen in nearly fifty years. On this upcoming Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children, let us recommit to building up the culture of life here in New Hampshire, through prayer, works of mercy, penance, and charity. Attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and through the intercession of St. Joseph, Guardian of the Holy Family, may we offer ever more compelling witness to the Gospel of Life.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Peter A. Libasci". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci, D.D.
Bishop of Manchester