



California Bishops Commit to Working for Better Futures for California's Women, Children, and Families

The approaching 49th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* comes at a historic moment. The nation stands on the precipice of potentially overturning *Roe v. Wade*. At the same time, the Governor and state legislators have issued calls to make California a "sanctuary" destination for women seeking abortions from in and out of state.

However, asking to increase the number of abortions in California completely misses a vital, life-affirming point. California is already uniquely situated to respond actively to the needs of women, children, and families. Over the years, the California Catholic Conference has supported the state's dynamic efforts to build programs for our most vulnerable populations, lifting families out of poverty and affirming the inherent dignity of each person.

Furthermore, the Catholic Church is the largest provider of private social services in California. We serve millions of the most at-risk families through our Catholic Charities and diocesan ministries, our Catholic hospitals and healthcare systems, and our Catholic schools and parishes.

With Pope Francis, we believe that abortion attacks the "sacredness of human life,"¹ and that "it is not 'progressive' to try to resolve problems by eliminating a human life."² At this pivotal moment, we, the Bishops of the Dioceses of California, commit to a vision for our state that honors women with life-affirming support and practical resources so that all families can thrive, and so that no woman feels trapped into the devastating decision to end a life by abortion.

WE ENVISION

- A California that proclaims the inherent dignity of every woman, man, and child, born and unborn, and promotes the common good and human flourishing of all people.
- A California that prioritizes the wellbeing of women, children, and families not only with material resources but accompanied in solidarity.
- A California that celebrates with all mothers and fathers the tremendous gift of each child and affirms and empowers families welcoming children by birth, adoption, or fostering.

WE RESOLVE

- To commit to our sisters that we, the Catholic community of California, will be by your side as you walk the journey of motherhood.
- To raise awareness of the abundant life-affirming safety net resources available to women, children, and families in California through faith-based, community, and public agencies, including food, housing, healthcare, mental healthcare, intimate partner violence intervention, paid leave, childcare, education, employment, economic and material assistance.
- To unite our state's life-affirming pregnancy shelters, centers, and clinics, creating an accessible statewide network to accompany women facing challenging pregnancies and in the early years of parenthood.
- To advocate for transformative family policies, including increased access to affordable housing, prioritization of homeless pregnant and parenting women, expanded paid leave for families, dignified care for incarcerated pregnant and parenting women, and streamlined processes for families fostering and adopting infants and children.
- To empower our Catholic community to accompany the most vulnerable women, children, and families in our state, proclaiming the dignity of every human life through word and action.

Inspired by the love of the Triune God mirrored in the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and animated by the ministry of Jesus to comfort, provide, heal and restore, we dedicate ourselves to this cause.



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