

July 6, 2022

Dear Friends,

I have been reflecting upon and praying about the moral issues underlying the recent Supreme Court ruling on *Dobbs vs. Jackson* ever since it was announced on June 24th. As you might expect, I've received a number of inquiries about The University of Scranton's position on this matter and so please allow me to offer you the following.

As a Catholic and Jesuit institution, the University clearly stands in support of life, from conception to natural death. The Society of Jesus in the United States has written in depth on the subject of abortion, and I refer you to [Protecting the Least Among Us](#) (2018) for more on the position of the Jesuits. One of the most striking statements within this document, in my opinion, reads: "Until men and women individually and collectively make a profound commitment to the value and dignity of all human life, we will never find the true peace, justice and reconciliation God desires for us."

Let us remember that, in addition to the protection of the unborn, this "commitment to the value and dignity of all human life" includes the support of children and their parents, *after* the birth of a child as well as before. As the U.S. Jesuits wrote in their response to *Dobbs vs. Jackson*, "we also affirm our belief that building what Saint John Paul II called a culture of life requires a stronger social safety net than our country has today." We need to explore ways to strengthen and maintain this safety net for the common good, and especially for women who may have been forced into situations for which they are not prepared or did not seek, and who, far too often, do not have the support of the father of the child within their womb.

The Catholic Church must continue to demonstrate its call to be heralds of the culture of life in practical and effective ways. As our bishop, Most Rev. Joseph Bambera, recently stated, "While already the largest private provider of social services in the United States, the Catholic Church must redouble its efforts and always stand ready to assist young women and couples who are facing unexpected or difficult pregnancies." I support our bishop in this noble goal.

The implications of the Supreme Court's decision are far reaching and invoke strong emotions from many angles. In order for any real progress to be made, people from both sides of the abortion argument must listen to and understand each other on the questions that matter most. Moving forward in the light of Christ relies upon such dialogue.

I expect much debate will continue to unfold about the Court's ruling in the days, weeks and months ahead, on both the legal and moral fronts. Since Fr. Theodore Hesburgh once referred to the University of Notre Dame – and, by extension, all Catholic universities – as “a place where the Church does its thinking”, we should understand and look for ways to engage our role as a thought leader in these discussions. For the moment, I ask you to join me in continued prayer and thought as we move forward in our mission.

Best wishes for a safe and peaceful summer.

Yours faithfully,

Fr. Marina