



The Roman Catholic Diocese of Fresno

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STATEMENT FROM THE MOST REVEREND JOSEPH V. BRENNAN, D.D. IN COLLABORATION WITH RIGHT TO LIFE OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

On June 29, the United States Supreme Court issued a grievously unjust decision that prohibits state governments from safeguarding women, and that continues to afford extensive legal protection to the abortion industry. Together with my brother bishops throughout the United States, I condemn this latest Supreme Court defense of abortion, an injustice that kills hundreds of thousands of children every year in America, while scarring the souls of their mothers and fathers.

In its *June Medical Services v. Russo* decision, the Court struck down a Louisiana law imposing certain health and safety standards on abortion providers. In the controlling plurality opinion, the Court held that states do not have the authority to pass such laws, because the burdens on abortion access were weightier than the healthcare benefits of the law. Thus, the Court elevated abortion above patient safety, and above the clear constitutional power of state governments to regulate healthcare for the common good.

As the bishop and shepherd of this Diocese, I must echo and amplify the prophetic voice of the Church in opposing these grave attacks on human dignity. St. John Paul II affirmed that no civilized society can justly allow, nor any Catholic support, a legal right to abortion. “To claim the right to abortion, infanticide and euthanasia, and to recognize that right in law, means to attribute to human freedom a perverse and evil significance: that of an absolute power over others and against others.”¹ The timeless teaching of this great saint has been echoed repeatedly by our current Holy Father, Pope Francis.

While opposing injustice, the Church is also earnest and zealous in offering mercy and compassion to all who seek it. For persons who have chosen abortion, the Church offers the healing of the Sacraments, as well as the material and healthcare support of Catholic institutions throughout the country and within the Diocese of Fresno. We particularly highlight the post-abortion healing ministries Project Rachel and Rachel’s Vineyard for their extraordinary work.

I conclude by asking for God’s mercy and our Blessed Mother’s intercession for our deeply divided and wounded country. Let us ask Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Empress of the Americas and patroness of the unborn, to ask her Son to protect all innocent human life from conception to natural death, to change the hearts and minds of our lawmakers and judges, and to establish justice throughout our land. Oh Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee!

¹ St. John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae* § 20.