

St. Robert Bellarmine

*1424 First Capitol Drive South
St. Charles, MO 63303*

20 June 2022

Dear Fellow Parishioners:

I'm writing this letter because of concern over what we may be facing in the coming weeks as a result of the upcoming Supreme Court decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. As I write this, there has not been a ruling yet, but it may happen by the time you read this letter. I have two concerns for our parish: (1) Physical Safety; and (2) How We Discuss This Issue. This letter is intended to help us in both areas.

Physical Safety

Many of our fellow citizens are protesting because of the possibility that the Supreme Court may overturn the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision which ruled that a right to abortion exists in our Constitution. If the Court overturns *Roe*, the protests may get louder and more violent. We can expect the Catholic Church to be a major target of these protests, because we have been the most visible and vocal opponent of abortion since 1973.

What does this mean for us at St. Robert? The odds are slim that we will be the target of a protest. We are a small parish in a fairly conservative place. Major protests are much more likely in the city of St. Louis and/or at major Catholic institutions like our Cathedral. Nevertheless, we must be prepared.

If you encounter protesters while at our parish who are attempting to disrupt the Mass or a social event, politely tell them that our church is private property, and politely ask them to leave. If they refuse, walk away, take out your cell phone, dial "911", and request police support. Be very careful what you say or do. We live in a culture where people record video of everything. You do not want to be seen on the evening news, being made to look bad. And with clever video editing, anyone can be made to look bad. Don't say or do anything provocative.

Discussing the Issue

In our culture today, we've gotten to the point where we seem unable to discuss issues as rational adults. Opposing points of view become polarized, and many treat those who disagree with them as an enemy. We have to change that mindset, starting with ourselves.

Most of the people who are Pro-Choice are not evil people who want to kill babies. Some people have been misled by politicians, the media, and the abortion industry into believing they are protecting women from undue suffering. Others don't share our belief that the unborn child is a human life. Their motives are pure, but they have been misled.

The media, the politicians, and the abortion industry are not so innocent. They have portrayed Catholics as caring only about the baby until he/she is born; then, doing nothing to help the mother or child afterward. That is simply not true. We care about both the mother, who is worried how she will be able to handle her pregnancy, and the child she is carrying. That is why we Catholics have been so visible and vocal in this debate.

Catholic Charities	St. Vincent de Paul Northwest District	St. Charles Local Catholic Resources
Adoption & Foster Care Services Adult Basic Education and GED Classes Case Management Counseling Domestic Violence Assistance Drug Abuse Treatment Emergency Assistance Employment and Job Training Health Care Homeless Services Housing Assistance Maternity Services Residential Services	Home Visits Bridges program Food Friendship Beds/furniture Car repair/purchase Housing/rental assistance Pregnancy care support Prescriptions Spiritual accompaniment Utility assistance	Birthright of St. Charles Our Lady's Inn Sts. Joachim and Ann Care Service

In the table above, you will find the many Catholic agencies and services provided in the St. Louis area. In St. Charles alone, we have two agencies, Birthright of St. Charles and Our Lady's Inn, that make every attempt to help both mother and baby, before and after the birth of the child. Both provide counseling and ongoing assistance, before and after the child is born.

So, if you find yourself in a discussion with relatives, friends, or coworkers, who suggest we are not concerned about women and the situation they find themselves in, you may wish to share this information with them. You may also wish to remind them that people in need – ANY need – often turn to us, because they know we will help them, whether they are Catholic or not. We help everyone, because WE are Catholic, and this is what Jesus calls us to do.

You may also need to help others understand that if *Roe v Wade* is overturned, it merely eliminates abortion as a “national right”. The issue would then return to the state level, and individual states and communities will decide what they wish to allow or prohibit.

I hope this letter helps all of us prepare for what might be coming in the next few weeks. Remember, we are simply supporting our belief that ALL life is sacred. At the same time, we must be kind and loving to those with whom we disagree, respecting them as our brothers and sisters, fellow children of God. Let's keep our heads, stay cool, pray for assistance, and continue to pray for mothers and their babies.

May God bless you and keep you and your family safe.

Yours in Christ,



Deacon Phil