

# Novena for the Legal Protection of Human Life

USCCB **Call to  
PRAYER**  
Life, Marriage, and Religious Liberty

Photo via Twinkl20 / @twinkl.com. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

The upcoming Supreme Court vacancy provides us with yet another occasion requiring focused prayer. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops does not support or oppose the confirmation of any presidential nominee. However, given this historic moment, the U.S. bishops are urging all people of good will to pray that a change in the U.S. Supreme Court may move our nation closer to the day when every human being is protected in law and welcomed in life.

From **Friday, August 3, 2018 to Friday, September 28, 2018**, the weekly Call to Prayer will be adapted as a nine-week Novena for the Legal Protection of Human Life. In addition to the current invitation to fast on Fridays, participants are encouraged to pray one *Our Father*, *Hail Mary*, and *Glory Be* for the intention of the novena. *Please see the back of this insert for specific prayers and ways to learn.*

Participants will also be provided with weekly opportunities to learn more about *Roe v. Wade*, and share that information with their representatives.

*“With our voices raised to God, perhaps we will one day live in a country that protects the most vulnerable of people, the child in the womb, and that mothers would know of the support and help the Church is ready to offer whenever they face a challenging or unplanned pregnancy.”*

- Most Revered Bishop Michael F. Burbidge

**JOIN**

**Join the movement. Subscribe to weekly reminders via e-mail or text message. Like us on Facebook.**

In his weekly podcast, Bishop Burbidge addresses current issues and topics, including the novena for the Legal Protection of Human life.

Please listen to his “Walk Humbly Podcast” by visiting [www.arlingtondiocese.org/bishop/On-the-Air/](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/bishop/On-the-Air/)





## Starting August 3rd, on every Friday please:

PRAY: May a change in the US Supreme Court move our nation closer to the day when every human being is protected in law and welcomed in life. *Our Father...Hail Mary...Glory Be...*

FAST : Offer a sacrifice for the intention

### Week 3: August 17th, 2018

LEARN: **Abortion is not health care.** Abortion advocates speak as if abortion is health care, a procedure that is morally and emotionally equivalent to surgically removing one's tonsils or appendix. It is often conveyed as so morally neutral that only a few religious outliers find it objectionable. Yet in reality, the vast majority, over 85%, of OB/GYNs, coming from many faiths or no faith refuse to be associated with or perform an abortion. In addition, according to the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute, 86% of hospitals were not involved in abortion. Finally, even Roe acknowledges that abortion is unlike other procedures performed by a health professional and that unborn children deserve some protection.<sup>3</sup> Abortion is not health care and we do a disservice to women and health care providers to pretend it is.

### Week 4: August 24th, 2018

LEARN: **Roe's extreme abortion license is not widely supported.** Abortion advocates claim that *Roe* enjoys broad public support and some recent polls seem to provide evidence for this claim. But most polls don't explain *Roe's* extreme abortion license and some misrepresent it. For example, a 2016 Pew Research Center poll claims 69% of Americans favor *Roe v. Wade* and 28% oppose it. But the poll wrongly describes *Roe* as establishing "a woman's constitutional right to an abortion, at least in the first three months of pregnancy." The fact is, *Roe* made abortion legal through all 9 months of pregnancy and for virtually any reason. The vast majority of Americans oppose the policy of nearly unlimited abortion dictated by *Roe*, and most believe abortion should not be legal for the reasons it is most often performed. A June 2018 Gallup poll shows that 72% of Americans said abortion should be illegal in the second trimester and 87% said abortion should be illegal in the last trimester. A 2018 Marist poll shows that 51% of women said abortion should never be permitted (9%) or permitted only in cases of rape, incest, and to save the woman's life (42%).<sup>4</sup> So why do polls show a majority of Americans favoring *Roe v. Wade*? Because they don't really know what *Roe* did.

### Week 5: August 31st, 2018

LEARN: **Roe is bad Constitutional law.** Even legal experts who support abortion believe *Roe* is not well-reasoned and is a case of extreme judicial overreach.

- The late Yale Law Professor John Hart Ely said, *Roe v. Wade* is "a very bad decision...because it is not constitutional law and gives almost no sense of an obligation to try to be."
- Attorney Edward Lazarus, former law clerk to *Roe's* author, Justice Blackmun, put it this way: "As a matter of constitutional interpretation and judicial method, *Roe* borders on the indefensible... [It is] one of the most intellectually suspect constitutional decisions of the modern era."
- Harvard Law Professor Lawrence Tribe criticized *Roe* saying, "behind its own verbal smokescreen, the substantive judgment on which it rests is nowhere to be found."
- Justice Sandra Day O'Connor said, "The Court's abortion decisions have already worked a major distortion in the Court's Constitutional jurisprudence...no legal rule or doctrine is safe from ad hoc nullification by this Court."<sup>4</sup>
- And then-Circuit Judge (now Justice) Ruth Bader Ginsburg said *Roe* "ventured too far in the change it ordered and presented an incomplete justification for its action."

When experts on both sides of the abortion debate agree that *Roe* is bad law, reversing it makes good legal sense and would return abortion policy back to the people to be decided through the democratic process.

### Week 6: September 7th, 2018

LEARN: **Pro-life laws can and do reduce the abortion rate.** Most people on both sides of the abortion debate agree that reducing the number of abortions is a desirable outcome. While some argue that contraception is the key to reducing the abortion rate, real-world evidence does not back that up. Instead, research shows that even when women were provided with free "emergency contraception" ahead of time, the pregnancy and abortion rate remained statistically equivalent with those who were not provided with it. In fact, the availability of contraception and abortion can increase the rate of unintended pregnancies (as well as sexually transmitted infections) as studies show that people engage in more frequent and riskier behavior if they believe their risk has been lowered. On the other hand, evidence suggests that laws restricting the funding of abortion (like the Hyde amendment preventing Medicaid funds from going to abortion) or limiting its availability, involving parents, and providing women with more information lower the rate of abortion. Unfortunately, *Roe*, its companion case *Doe*, and some subsequent rulings have been used to invalidate many laws meant to lower the rate of abortion.

### Week 7: August 14th, 2018

LEARN: Abortion is often portrayed as essential for women to achieve freedom and equality with men, yet many report feeling some degree of pressure or aborting to please someone else—often their partner. Further, after the abortion, many women report feelings of depression, suicidal or self-harm inclinations, sadness, shame, and regret. Women would be better served if society tried to creatively answer the needs of single mothers, mothers trying to get through school, mothers needing higher or more stable finances, etc. rather than telling them that the death of their children is the best answer. We can and should do better for all women.