



ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL ORTHODOX BISHOPS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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Catholic and Orthodox Christians Affirm Sanctity of Life, Invite People into the Embrace of Christ

Wednesday, January 20, 2016

NEW YORK—On the occasion of the 43rd anniversary of Roe v. Wade, Orthodox and Catholic Christians will join in prayer and public gathering to express their long-standing belief that all life is sacred.

An official delegation of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States will participate in choir in the Opening Mass of the National Prayer Vigil for Life at the Roman Catholic Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, January 21. The following day, January 22, Catholic and Orthodox bishops will jointly offer prayer to begin the March for Life at 12 noon on the National Mall.

As he reflected upon the importance of this year's sanctity of life events, His Eminence Cardinal Timothy M. Dolan, Archbishop of New York and chairman of the Committee on Pro-Life Activities of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), said: "While we lament the tragedy of abortion in our land, our Lord continues to show us how good can come from evil. Our collaborative and prayerful efforts with our Orthodox brothers and sisters have certainly been a sign of hope in our combined efforts to build a culture of life."

Highlighting the importance of prayer when addressing the issue of abortion, His Eminence Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh, chairman of the Committee for Church and Society of the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops in the U.S., stressed the need to "pray not only for those who are currently considering an abortion, but also those who have already undergone the procedure and may despair of God's love and mercy."

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The faithful and all people of good will are invited to attend both the Prayer Vigil and the March for Life Rally. For more information, please visit: www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/resources/index.cfm (<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/resources/index.cfm>) and <http://marchforlife.org/mfl-2016/> (<http://marchforlife.org/mfl-2016/>)

The following statement was signed by Archbishop Joseph E. Kurtz of Louisville, Kentucky, president of the USCCB; His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, chairman of the Assembly of Orthodox Bishops; Cardinal Dolan; and Metropolitan Savas:

**Seeking Life, Mercy, and Healing
A Common Statement by Orthodox and Catholic Bishops
on the 43rd Anniversary of Roe v. Wade**

On January 22, Catholic and Orthodox Christians will once again stand in solidarity on the occasion of the 43rd anniversary of Roe v. Wade. As our communities firmly believe in the sanctity of life, the faithful—along with many people of other traditions and good will—lament the legal circumstances that facilitate abortion and the cultural phenomena that present abortion as the only choice for expectant mothers experiencing difficult conditions.

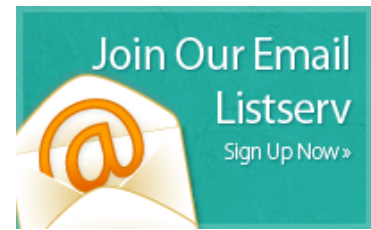
We recognize that the choice to abort an unborn child ultimately reflects the broken condition of humanity.

We remind the world of our common teaching that life begins at the earliest moments of conception and that life, at all stages of its development, is sacred. We denounce the termination of a life as a response to unwanted pregnancies or as a method of overcoming social and economic challenges. We embrace the mothers and the couples who, in spite of difficulties, choose to bring their pregnancy to term. At the same time, however, we invite those who may have undergone or facilitated an abortion to turn to Christ with contrite hearts, seeking to overcome their grief through His forgiveness, mercy and healing.

His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios of America, Chairman
Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA

Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurz
Archbishop of Louisville
President, U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops

Metropolitan Savas of Pittsburgh
Chairman, Committee for Church and Society
Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA



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Timothy Michael Cardinal Dolan
Archbishop of New York
Chairman, Committee of Pro-Life Activities
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

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