

*May 13, 2022*

## CARDINAL SEAN BLOG POST AND STATEMENT

At the Presbyteral Council, we asked our Archdiocesan General Counsel Fran O'Connor and Father Bryan Hehir to speak about the ramifications of the recently leaked draft Supreme Court decision in the Dobbs case.

The leaked document, of course, is only a potential version of what the final decision may be. But, all the controversy that it has created is something we want to address because many extreme things are being said. Also, the fact that Catholic institutions have been targeted in some places is truly outrageous.

The Church has worked, prayed and advocated for 50 years for the overturning of this very flawed decision, in which an activist court legislated for the entire country rather than allowing the American people to have a vote on this issue. For us, this is not a question of Catholic doctrine that we want to impose on the country, but rather a matter of defense of innocent human life, which is the obligation of everyone — regardless of faith.

In response to this ongoing issue, I have prepared the following statement, which I would like to share with you:

“The leak of Justice Alito’s draft opinion on abortion has brought many voices into a conflicted question now almost fifty years old. Throughout those years, from the Roe v. Wade decision until today, the Catholic Church has been part of the abortion debate in this country. Two characteristics have marked our position. First, while Catholic moral teaching has opposed abortion since the apostolic era, the case we have made to our religiously pluralistic nation is that abortion is fundamentally a human rights question. Such questions are argued in rational terms: the right in danger is the right to life. Its defense in the public arena can and should be articulated in ways which those of any faith or no faith can analyze and understand. We have tried to make that case and will continue to do so whatever the final decision of the Court will be. Second, the human rights argument means that human life must be protected before birth and after birth. A pro-life position does not end at birth; it must extend to a public vision which encompasses the common good of our society. The child whose life is protected by the moral and civil law deserves the support of a society which will provide the socio-economic conditions in which life can flourish.

A draft opinion will not settle our long national debate. As it goes forward, before and after the final decision is made, my hope is that all participants will respect the dignity of others; on a question as deep as the one we seek to decide this attitude is essential.”