



# DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

*Office of the Bishop*

January 2019

Dear Friends in Christ,

Since 1973, over 60 million children have been killed as a result of the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision, legalizing abortion nationwide.

Some state legislatures have pushed back against this inhuman and immoral situation with varying degrees of legislative success. Distressingly, federal courts have also upheld the legality of an especially monstrous way of ending a baby's life—partial birth abortion. And now New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has signed into law the "Reproductive Health Act." This law is the most extensive abortion law in the United States.

The law will add the right to abortion to the New York constitution. It allows nonphysicians to perform abortions. It allows abortion through the third trimester—up to the due date—if the woman's health is endangered (no definition of "endangered" is given). It repeals protections for babies who survive abortion.

New York was the first state to legalize abortion in 1970—three years before *Roe v. Wade*. It currently has the highest abortion rate in the country. This state is remarkably singular in its disregard for the life of the unborn. Ironically, New York has outlawed the death penalty on the basis that it constitutes cruel and unusual punishment.

Governor Cuomo's enthusiastic embrace of the ideology of the culture of death, as well as other Catholic lawmakers who voted for this legislation, is diametrically opposed to the teachings of the Catholic Church. Valid canonical remedies to address the scandal and harm done seem, however, to be elusive and few in number.

I pray that God's compassionate mercy and healing may touch the hearts of those who worked so determinedly to bring about the passage of this law. May they be converted from the evil they have done. Indeed, all of us should pray, in charity, for this outcome.

For those of us in Michigan who value life, the way forward is clear. We must let our elected representatives know our opinions on this matter and do all that we can to explain to them why the Church teaches about the sanctity of life as she does.

Some people think abortion now is a fact of life. It is, rather, a fact of death. Let us never back down from our vigorous defense of human life at all stages of its existence.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak  
Bishop of Grand Rapids