



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Office of the Bishop

May 2022

Dear friends in Christ,

We are expecting the U.S. Supreme Court to issue its decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* anytime between now and the end of June. We should not and cannot speculate on final outcomes based on a leaked opinion, but we are hopeful that our prayers in support of life will be answered.

Of course, legal protection must be accompanied by concern for mothers and their children. Regardless of the decision in *Dobbs*, the Church needs to redouble its efforts to accompany women and couples who are facing unexpected or difficult pregnancies, offering them loving and compassionate care. Catholic Charities West Michigan operates two baby pantries in West Michigan that, in 2021 alone, provided more than 3,200 families with needed supplies. In addition, many Catholics staff local pregnancy care centers or work through their parishes to provide local outreach and support. This is the Gospel of Life that we must live as Catholics.

But are we effective at communicating that help directly to women in desperate situations? How can our parishes ensure moms in need are aware of and easily able to access programs and resources? We seek to answer this question through an initiative called "Walking with Moms in Need," sponsored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. This parish-based movement helps identify local resources and asks parishioners to connect with local mothers in need to accompany them in receiving material, spiritual, and emotional support.

The Church will never cease to pray, work, and serve until the day when every human life is protected in law, and welcomed in love. I ask you to join me in a novena from June 1 – 9 in anticipation of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. The daily prayers in both English and Spanish can be found at <https://grdiocese.org/dobbs-novena/>

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Walkowiak
Bishop of Grand Rapids