

ACTION GUIDE

ANNIVERSARY OF ROE V. WADE: JANUARY

INTRODUCTION

On January 22, 1973, the Supreme Court legalized abortion throughout the United States in its companion decisions *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*. Since that time, millions of children have lost their lives, and millions of women and families have been wounded by abortion.

On June 24, 2022, the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision overturned *Roe v. Wade*, and we praise God for the great opportunity state and federal legislators now have to protect preborn children. While God, in His mercy, ended the nearly fifty-year nationwide regime of abortion on demand, right now state and federal laws, in many instances, are still hostile to preborn children. So, great prayer and advocacy is very needed.

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), no. 373, designates January 22 as a particular day of prayer and penance, called the "[Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children](#)." The Church directs:

In all the Dioceses of the United States of America, January 22 (or January 23, when January 22 falls on a Sunday) shall be observed as a particular day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion.

As individuals, we are called to observe this day through the penitential practices of prayer, fasting and/or almsgiving. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops provides resources to help parishes, schools, families, ministries, and individual Catholics participate in this important day of prayer and penance.

Free downloads and additional electronic resources can be found at respectlife.org/action-guides.

In addition, the USCCB also sponsors an annual, nationwide novena called **9 Days for Life**, which encompasses the liturgical observance of the Day of Prayer. Each day for nine days, a different intention is featured, accompanied by a short reflection, suggested actions, and related information as we pray for the respect and protection of every human life. Visit respectlife.org/9-days-for-life for more information on the annual campaign.

A sample timeline and activity, homily helps, announcements, and more are provided to help you get started. You are encouraged to adapt these resources as needed to fit your specific parish, school, or ministry.

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