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**STATEMENT**

**Archbishop John C. Wester's Statement  
Re: Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization Decision by the  
Supreme Court of the United States**

ALBUQUERQUE – Friday, June 24, 2022—IMMEDIATE RELEASE—Most Reverend John C. Wester, Archbishop of Santa Fe, has released a statement regarding the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization decision by the Supreme Court of the United States:

The Supreme Court of the United States' decision in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization affirms our belief that life is precious, valuable, and should be protected at all stages and that states have a compelling interest to protect the unborn and limit abortion, is welcome news. This has been the Church's prayer for the last 50 years.

This decision is the culmination of prayer and decades of legislative advocacy, life-affirming events, and walking with families facing an unplanned pregnancy. In New Mexico, we have worked hard to expand prenatal services through home visiting, secure access to universal pre-K, an increase in SNAP benefits (food stamps), and to advocate for the family tax credit. These policies help to support women and families in life-affirming ways. Yet, there are many more ways we as Catholics must support and walk with women and families in need.

While the Dobbs ruling is hopeful in our work to protect life and provide for mothers and children, our work has just begun. New Mexico has very few limits on abortion, even allowing minors to seek an abortion without parental knowledge. It is well known that many from other states come to New Mexico seeking an abortion because it is so accessible. In those ways, New Mexico makes ending a life easy but keeping one more difficult. I hope we can reverse this to support women and families to make life-affirming choices.

The Supreme Court has changed a law. We must change hearts.

In turn, we must redouble our efforts to reverse the prioritization of abortion in favor of helping women raise their children despite daunting circumstances. From decades of holding the hands of those who are struggling with the decision to have an abortion, we know that for many women, abortion is not a choice they

want to make but rather a choice they feel they have to make. We know from our work with mothers and families that they don't need expanded abortion services. They need support and care. They need housing assistance, prenatal and postpartum care, medical care for their families, home visiting, protection from domestic violence, paid family leave, childcare, and maternity accommodations from employers. Rising inflation and soaring housing and healthcare costs make it more difficult to raise a child. I hope we expand access to life-affirming services that empower women in our state with the confidence that they won't walk through pregnancy or parenting alone or fearful.

I hope women know they are cared for and supported and that there are life-affirming options when faced with an unplanned pregnancy. I hope lawmakers provide equitable assistance and commit new funding and resources for maternity and childcare. I ask that all Catholics throughout the state meet this moment and actively engage through the New Mexico Conference of Catholic Bishops, in their parishes, and in their communities. Learn more about the Church's nationwide, parish-based effort called [Walking with Moms in Need to prayerfully support pregnant and parenting mothers in need](#). We have compiled a [local resource list](#) for pregnant moms. It is not enough to claim you are for life; you must be the hands and feet of Christ working to make it a reality. Be a strong voice, a faithful companion on the journey, and a beacon of hope to those struggling with difficult decisions.

I want to emphasize that as pastor and shepherd of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, the church is here for everyone, even those who might disagree and are not rejoicing today. To those of you who are considering abortion, we are here to journey with you and to support you and your children in difficult situations. And while I am grateful today for the Supreme Court's decision and the countless lives that will be saved because of it, I look to increase our work to protect the sanctity of every life and support New Mexico's women, children, and families and to journey with women in need.

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