

What Now?

In the hours after the Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v Wade* (1973), and *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pa. v. Casey* (1992), people have been reacting in many ways. Some are cheering with joy. Some are screaming with rage. And some have started to ask that good Lutheran question: "What does this mean?"

Frankly, we're not sure yet.

Contrary to what seems to be a popular misunderstanding, this decision doesn't terminate all abortions in the country. In fact, most of the population of the United States still has access to abortions according to state laws that are already in place.

According to Wisconsin State Law 940.04 "(1) Any person, other than the mother, who intentionally destroys the life of an unborn child is guilty of a Class H felony," except when a therapeutic abortion is necessary to save the life of the mother. (This law also recognizes that "In this section 'unborn child' means a human being from the time of conception until it is born alive.") I also understand that the Attorney General has suggested he will not prosecute according to this law.

There are some things we can say with certainty.

Abortion is still murder. Biologically and theologically, life begins at conception. The only authority that God has given to man to take human life is the power given to the government to use "the sword" on the wrongdoer, the criminal (Romans 13). While we are all conceived and born sinners, there is nothing "criminal" about an unborn child.

Overturing *Roe v Wade* will not bring back to life the more than 63,459,781 children whose lives were taken by abortion since 1973. Nor will it provide the resources needed to care for children unborn and newborn, for children put up for adoption or into the foster care system. These issues have long been neglected, perhaps in part because of the "convenient solution" of abortion.

As a fellow pastor has written: "Today is a day to give thanks to the Lord that *Roe v Wade* has been overturned. It is a time to celebrate. But that celebration must be tempered with the recognition that the fight against abortion is simply moving into a new stage.

"The overturning of *Roe v Wade* is not like the atomic bombs that ended the war in the Pacific during World War II. It is more like the Battle of Midway in June 1942. It is a victory that makes ultimate victory possible. But the road to that victory followed the path of names like Tarawa, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. It was a long a brutal fight against a fanatical enemy.

"Today we give thanks. But we must not be naïve. The next stage in the struggle against this evil has just started." (Rev Mark Surburg, surburg.blogspot.com)

Therefore, we begin with prayer, and prepare for the work ahead:

Gracious God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we give you thanks for this ruling that reflects Your good creation and the value You place on all human life. We pray for those who have undergone an abortion; lead them to repentance and to the comfort of Your Gospel. We pray for those who protest this decision; turn their hearts away from the slaughter of the unborn and towards You, the Lord and Giver of Life. Work peace in our nation, and guide our leaders with Your wisdom and according to Your will as they tread the difficult paths ahead. Empower us all to be loving servants who bring Christ's compassion and mercy to fathers and mothers, to

children born and unborn. Teach us to care for one another, as we share the truth of life found only in Jesus Christ. All this we ask, in the Name of our Savior Jesus. Amen.