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by NCR Staff

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NCR columnist M.T. Davilá outlines four ways that the Catholic Church can support women in a post-Roe world. While "surrounding mothers with love" is certainly essential to addressing crisis pregnancies, there are national-level advocacy efforts that will impact the lives of women much more effectively, she says. NCR reader responses to this column have been edited for length and clarity. To join the conversation, follow the guidelines below.

What a great article with some solid ideas for the care of women who find themselves in unwanted pregnancies.

Supporting women is the goal and giving the babies a chance for a good life with others who will care and love a baby they cannot have, seems like a logical alternative to abortion. But I really wonder if those who shout their anti-abortion stance will be ready to empathize with the mother and the baby. There has been an attitude of "it's her fault" and "I don't want my tax dollars going to free programs for the freeloaders." I haven't seen much empathy and support for the lifetime well-being of the baby from those who sternly stand for the right of the baby to be born.



I do see hope in the presentation of these alternatives, especially allowing same-sex and single parent adoptions. Now if we can get people to finally understand that not everyone has control of their reproductive power, maybe we could turn a corner and we wouldn't return to the past scenario of rich abortions and poor butcheries. Maybe we can see our responsibility in helping the child not only be born, but to live in a loving family with support and healthcare.

FAYE PREDNY

Park Forest, Illinois

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The article, "Four ways the church can get ready for a post-Roe world" should read "Four ways the church should have been ready for the real world." The Democratic Party has been fighting for these "ways" for decades, yet the political party the U.S. hierarchy supports — and demands in some cases its flock to support — is the Republican Party.

That's not going to change in a post-Roe world or any world because the GOP will identify another issue its base supports. Culture warrior clerics won't give up because it is engrained into their DNA. Compromise/cooperation is not in their vocabulary. We know this from their open warfare with Pope Francis.

One need not look far to learn minority mothers have the highest number of maternity deaths, the highest poverty rate, the highest rate of food insecurity, and the highest rate of domestic violence to name a few. The U.S. Catholic Church has a track record of too little, too late. They could have been "surrounding mothers with love" a century ago. Women's rights are bad today yet are miles ahead of where they were in 1922. Where was the church then? Where is it now?

MICHAEL J. MCDERMOTT

Tyler, Texas

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When I read, "Four ways the church can get ready for a post-Roe world," I thought about it from a reading of Section 1 of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. I suspect that few will agree with my conclusion, but I believe there may be value in considering it.

The question is: What does it mean to outlaw laws that "deny any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Clearly, when abortion is outlawed, an abortion provider who performs an abortion would be guilty of breaking the law. The key is that an abortion provider cannot perform an abortion without a pregnant woman requesting such an abortion. That pregnant woman would not be in the position to request such an abortion had she not been impregnated in the first place.

The problem with this approach is the development by the state of adequate legal remedies for each of these three parties that can be enforced across the board. Are we ready for such an approach?

To be clear, I oppose abortion because I see it as mortal sin. At the same time, as a retired federal employee, I hold the U.S. Constitution with high esteem.

STEPHEN A. MORTON

Rio Rancho, New Mexico

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Since the *Roe* v. *Wade* decision in 1973, the Catholic Church in the United States has been marshaling its efforts toward rescission of that decision and the restoration of anti-abortion laws nationwide. At no time in the past 50 years did they argue that we should envelop women "in love" to convince them abortion is the wrong choice. At no time did they acknowledge that women are first-class citizens with privacy and agency rights which are taken by men to be self-evident.

With the imminence of the *Dobbs* ruling, which some bishops think will abrogate *Roe* while simultaneously acknowledging it will not end abortion nationwide, they argue for policies and programs which will expand the social safety net. Some of those programs are part and parcel of President Joe Biden's Build Back Better agenda. Did they champion his agenda from the outset of his administration? No, they instead tried to divide the Catholic population, and the voting base, with arguments about Biden's fitness to be a Catholic.

It is ironic that the programs which the bishops are promoting, which have been parts of the Democratic Party's agenda for years, are seen as anathema by their preferred party, the Republicans and their libertarian enablers. The bishops, who have been vocal in their opposition to the Democratic Party for decades, will not now be credible allies of that party when it tries to improve the lives of all our citizens, not just women in need.

CHARLES A. LE GUERN

Granger, Indiana

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