



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MISSOURI

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

May 5, 2022

Dear Siblings in Christ,

As faithful followers of Jesus Christ, united in Holy Baptism, we covenant to "strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being."¹ This is a difficult and at times seemingly impossible task, and yet it is the sacred task to which we have all been called.

Over the last few days, we have heard, read, and seen reactions to a leaked draft opinion from the Supreme Court of the United States in regards to the landmark 1973 ruling of *Roe v. Wade*. While we do not know the final opinion of the ruling, there are mixed reactions and emotions around the possible outcome.

We are all made in the image and likeness of God and we affirm that all life, from conception to death, is sacred and should be afforded the dignity of belovedness. I join other Episcopal leaders, both lay and ordained, to reaffirm the Church's commitment to oppose any legislation "on the part of the national or state governments which would abridge or deny the right of individuals to reach an informed decision"² around reproductive rights and health.

The struggle for women's reproductive rights, worth, and dignity continues to be undermined and threatened by those who would deny the possibility of choice. As people of faith we cannot stay silent. I stand with my sisters and siblings in Christ in declaring that the ability to make decisions about their bodies and their futures are theirs to make and should not be legislated. To deny the right of self-determination is to deny the very essence of dignity.

I invite you to join me in praying for our nation, our lawmakers, and the judiciary as we navigate the way ahead. May Christ be our companion and our guide in the days and months ahead.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Deon K. Johnson".

The Rt. Rev. Deon K. Johnson
Eleventh Bishop of Missouri

¹ The Baptismal Covenant, Book of Common Prayer 1979, Page 305

² The 69th General Convention Resolution 1976