

Pastoral Letter by Bishop Earl Boyea of Lansing
Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time, September 10-11, 2022

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In 1931 the State of Michigan enacted strong pro-life legislation. This is our present law. In 1972, supporters of abortion brought that 1931 law before voters in a statewide ballot initiative. The people of this state rejected abortion. This is the last time the issue was tested at the ballot box.

Today, I call to our attention a new and grave threat to our children and to our culture of life. It is called the Reproductive Freedom for All initiative.

The Reproductive Freedom for All initiative will be on our ballots this fall where it will appear as Proposal 3. It seeks the approval of the people of this state to amend the Constitution of this State to include a so-called “right to abortion”. This effort is spearheaded by Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union. To tinker with the Constitution is very serious business. We should reject this proposal on that basis alone.

However, I want to be clear. The Reproductive Freedom for All initiative is the most extreme abortion proposal this country has ever witnessed. Based on the wording of the proposed amendment, this initiative seeks to enshrine abortion up to, and including, the day of birth in our state constitution. It also seeks to eliminate dozens of Michigan laws that presently regulate abortion. These include parental consent and notification laws; laws that prohibit partial-birth abortion; informed medical consent laws; 24-hour waiting periods; taxpayer funded abortion; laws that require abortion facilities to be licensed and inspected by the State of Michigan; laws that prosecute anyone who injures or kills a woman during an abortion; and laws that protect the conscience rights of persons who refuse to participate in abortion such as doctors and nurses.

What is more, the scope of the Reproductive Freedom for All proposal is not limited to the issue of abortion. It will also likely prohibit parental consent rights if your child wishes to pursue – or is being pressured into pursuing – medical procedures or chemical treatments intended to change the outward appearance of his or her biological sex. These include puberty blocking drugs and cross-sex hormones. Such invasive treatments for children who are gender-confused can inflict irreversible physiological damage coupled with long-term psychological, emotional and spiritual damage upon an already vulnerable young person.

It is likely that the Reproductive Freedom for All campaign will place Michigan at the national epicenter of the abortion debate. The pro-abortion lobby has already spent an estimated \$10 million collecting the needed signatures. Significantly more money will be spent during the campaign with pro-abortion elected officials and advocacy groups across the country ready to bombard Michigan voters with their propaganda in the weeks to come. As the Governor of this State has said repeatedly, both she and her allies in the pro-abortion lobby will, quote, “fight like hell” to prevail on this matter.

How then do we respond to those who fight like hell? Simple: We fight like heaven. What does that entail? First: We have to employ the three great spiritual weapons of the Christian life: Prayer, fasting and almsgiving. As Saint Peter Chrysologus wrote in the 5th century:

“Fasting is the soul of prayer, mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. Let no one try to separate them; they cannot be separated. If you have only one of them or not all

together, you have nothing.” Saint Peter assures us that, “Prayer knocks at the door, fasting obtains, mercy receives.”

Hence, on the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, Thursday, September 15, I am calling upon all within the Diocese of Lansing, both clergy and laity, to begin a 54-day Rosary Novena that will conclude upon the eve of polling day on November 8.

*This will be 54-days of prayer, fasting and almsgiving in union with the Blessed Virgin Mary who is Queen of the Family, the mother of all mothers and the patroness of the unborn. You can sign up for a daily text providing information and inspiration across each of the 54 days by texting **FightLikeHeaven** to **84576**.*

Second comes action. The Diocese of Lansing is cooperating with the Michigan Catholic Conference and Right to Life of Michigan to oppose and defeat this ballot proposal. They have created an umbrella campaign group called Citizens to Support MI Women and Children.

The most important frontline in this battle for life and love, however, will be the local parish. It will be you. If each of us does what we can – including prayer, sacrifice and action – we will overcome this attack on life. It’s as dramatic and as simple as that.

In all we do, please remember this: The pro-abortion lobby will do everything it can between now and polling day to hide the extreme elements of this proposal. That is also why we each have the happy duty of telling our family, our friends and our neighbors the truth about this ballot initiative. At present, most Michiganders don’t know about the Reproductive Freedom for All initiative but when they do know about it? They won’t like it.

We have less than two months before voting on November 8th. Time is short. Our task is great. The Lord, however, always provides. Therefore, let us work cheerfully and unstintingly knowing that His grace is sufficient. Thank you.

Assuring you of my prayers, I am sincerely yours in Christ,

+Earl Boyea

Bishop of Lansing