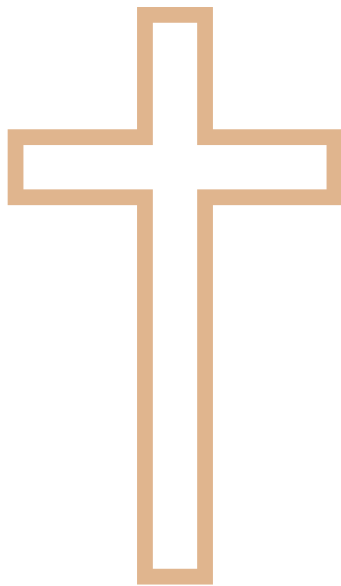


# *Declaration* FOR LIFE

*A statement from Christian Leaders at  
America's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*



*September 16, 2026*



## I

This year marks America's 250th anniversary. That milestone invites us to reckon with the convictions on which the country was built. The Declaration of Independence gives us three examples of "unalienable" rights: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Life is the first of those rights because it is the condition of the others. It is thus the most foundational of all rights.

We are followers of Christ from across American Christianity—pastors of churches, leaders in seminaries and universities, and members of allied organizations. We sign as individuals, rather than for the institutions we serve, but we believe we have an obligation as Christians and spiritual leaders to remind our countrymen of what Scripture and conscience together proclaim: that every human being, from the moment of our knitting together in our mothers' wombs, was fearfully and wonderfully made.<sup>1</sup> The divine image each human being bears was not earned. It cannot be forfeited. And it is the first duty of the Church to defend human dignity where it is denied.

The defense of human life is the oldest of American causes. From the dawn of our country, Christians have shaped America's moral life. In November 1620, Pilgrims aboard the Mayflower entered a covenant, "in the presence of God, and one of another," to constitute a civil body politic for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith. A decade later, John Winthrop told his fellow passengers aboard the Arbella that the Massachusetts Bay Colony would be a city upon a hill. That meant a community under covenant with the Almighty—a witness to all nations, accountable to the all-knowing, all-powerful Creator.

These covenants constitute the moral founding of America. They animated patriots who were as likely to rely on Biblical sources as Enlightenment thinkers. They echo in the Declaration of Independence, which grounded human rights in a Creator rather than human kings. In sum, they helped create a republic defined by the principle that human beings are made in God's image and answerable to Him for how they use their freedom.

The case for life flows inevitably from these Christian convictions. But those convictions are now under attack, despite their central role in the American experiment in liberty. Christians must defend them, and we must begin by leading on life.

For what is at stake on this anniversary is nothing less than the conviction on which every flourishing society finally rests: that each and every member of the human family, as a creature fashioned in the image of the divine Creator and Ruler, is the bearer of profound dignity. Where that conviction is honored, civilizations flourish. Where it is forgotten, cultures decline and fall.

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 139

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## II

Our assertion of human dignity is not novel. Christians have emphasized it since the days of Christ's ministry, beginning with the believers in ancient Rome and Greece who walked out of pagan cities to gather newborns abandoned to die. Human life is the gift of God, from conception until natural death. Every human power must respect it. Biology now confirms what faith and reason have always taught: that fertilization brings into being a new and distinct human organism, possessed of its own genome. The only question is whether the law should protect that human person.

We say yes. We affirm the human dignity of the unborn child at every week of gestation, of the child diagnosed with Down syndrome whose mother has been counseled to "end the pregnancy," of the patient whose pain leads them to question the value of life, and of the grandfather whose family is worn out by caregiving. The image of God in man is not contingent on circumstance. It does not vanish at the boundary of social usefulness or the threshold of suffering. Neither does our duty to defend it.

## III

Over four years have passed since the Supreme Court, in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, returned the abortion question from courts to legislatures. We give thanks for that decision. It overturned fifty years of judicial fiat against the plain text of the Constitution, against the Christian inheritance of the West, and against the elementary biological fact that an unborn child is a human being. We honor those who, year after year, refused to accept that tragic error as a settled issue.

But the reversal of *Roe* did not end abortion in America. Far from it. More abortions are performed in this country today than when *Roe* was still the law of the land—over one million abortions in 2025 alone. The main reason is a drug called mifepristone. Seventy percent of abortions in America are now carried out with this drug. Thanks to recent changes in government regulations, mifepristone can now be mailed into every state and city in America, regardless of local rules. The abortion drug is nearly always fatal to the unborn child and frequently injurious to the mother. Recent studies indicate the drug puts more than one in ten women who take it at risk of serious, life-threatening complications, including hemorrhaging, infections, and sepsis.

Despite all this, mifepristone can still be obtained without a physician visit, taken without physician follow-up or support, and dispensed over the internet, even from foreign countries, without meaningful supervision.

The crisis of chemical abortion is the work before us today. It is our front line in the defense of life. We must adopt laws in the states that protect life, but that is not enough. So long as the abortion drug can turn every mailbox in America into an abortion clinic, state laws alone cannot protect human life. We need a national response. As such, we call on Congress to end the scourge of mail-order abortions by banning the abortion drug.

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#### IV

The notion that some human lives are “unworthy of life” (*lebensunwertes Leben*) was popularized a century ago by atheistic intellectuals on both sides of the Atlantic, and it has survived to this day. Its modern proponents are more subtle. But their values are clear in proposals to eliminate children diagnosed in utero with Down syndrome, in proposals to extend physician-assisted suicide to minors and to those whose only diagnosis is mental illness or social distress, or in the steady advance of a culture that grades human worth by utility. Each step further undermines the principle of inherent human dignity and embraces the notion that some lives are “unworthy of life.” We dissent.

To the woman or family considering an abortion, we say that God loves you. We will help you. Find us at a local church, at a pregnancy resource center, at a maternity home, at a disability ministry, or at a post-abortion healing group. We are heartbroken by your pain, and we will not abandon you.

To our fellow believers, and indeed to all men and women of goodwill, we invite you to join us. Our cause is the basis of Western civilization—the cause that ended infanticide in the Roman world, that built the first hospitals in late antiquity, that produced the abolitionist conscience and the civil rights movement in America. It is a cause around which the most unlikely allies have always, in the end, found common ground.

To whom much is given, much will be required. America has been given much. May God grant us the wisdom to discern what is true, the courage to say what is true, and the love to live what is true—until He comes, or until He calls us home.

*Subscribed in the Year of our Lord 2026.*

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