



**Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen** OFM Conv DD STL  
Bishop of Parramatta

Level 2, 12 Victoria Rd, Parramatta NSW 2150  
PO Box 3066, North Parramatta, NSW 1750

☎ 02 8838 3400 📠 02 9630 4813

✉ [bishop@parracatholic.org](mailto:bishop@parracatholic.org)

🌐 [parracatholic.org](http://parracatholic.org)

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Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

We believe that all human beings are made in the image of God and that all human beings matter.

The Church maintains the vigorous defence of the dignity of the human person. This includes the protection of life from conception to natural death.

I have been closely following this abortion debate as it has unfolded in our parliament and across the public sphere. I join my voice with my brother bishops and many people of goodwill across many faiths who are alarmed at the newly-proposed NSW abortion legislation.

It is not enough to argue that this legislation is simply about “decriminalising abortion.” What’s at stake is far more complex and goes to the heart of a healthy society. As human beings, we all have a responsibility to care for each other.

Pope Francis reminds us bluntly: “It is not right to kill a human being, regardless of how small it is, to solve a problem.”

Whilst we affirm the sacredness of all life, the Church as a community of faith, hope and love stands by pregnant women to offer them support. That is why, closely linked to protection of the unborn is the ongoing care of women who are pregnant, especially those in difficult personal circumstances.

Our legislators and community need to provide more practical care and compassion to women facing these decisions.

In our diocese, our CatholicCare services offers a comprehensive pregnancy-related service for women and families that are expecting a baby. We want to help women in these complex situations.

Being born into this wondrous planet of ours is a blessing. May each of us, given this precious gift, never forget to pray with the Psalmist: “*You created my inmost self, knit me together in my mother's womb. For so many marvels I thank you; a wonder am I, and all your works are wonders.*” Psalms 139.

This is an ongoing critical issue where the Church will continue to speak prophetically.

Yours in Christ,

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