



## COLORADO CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

October 1, 2009

Dear Father/Deacon:

You may have recently become aware of a petition drive to collect signatures that seeks to place a constitutional amendment on the November 2010 ballot here in Colorado. This ballot initiative would define personhood as beginning at the moment of biological development. The term biological development is a vague term and it will be up to a court or the legislature to determine its meaning. As you may recall a similar initiative was run in 2008 that defined personhood as beginning at the moment of fertilization.

This letter is intended to explain why we the Bishops of Colorado, acting through the Colorado Catholic Conference, are not participating in the gathering of signatures for this ballot initiative. We affirm the principle that life begins at conception and therefore we affirm the personhood of the unborn. However, while we share the ultimate objective of this effort to bring about an end to legal abortion by overturning *Roe v. Wade*, we do not think that this strategy will provide a realistic opportunity for reversing *Roe*. Such a strategy will divert valuable resources away from other more constructive efforts in defense of human life such as enacting a fetal homicide law or an ultrasound and informed consent law.

The decision to allow signature collection at your parish is one we are leaving to the judgment of the pastor. If you are approached by people in your parish wishing to collect signatures for this ballot initiative, and you feel it is pastorally appropriate for your community, we will trust your decision.

The Catholic Church in Colorado has a long and active history of working, through state legislative efforts and other community initiatives, to protect life from conception to natural death. We will continue through every realistic means to work toward this end and we will keep you informed about our efforts at the state level so that your parishioners can be involved.

Thank you for everything you do to support the sanctity of human life.

In Christ,

+ *Charles J. Chaput, ofm. cap.*

+Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.  
Archbishop of Denver

+ *Arthur N. Tafoya*

+Most Reverend Arthur N. Tafoya, D.D.  
Bishop of Pueblo

+ *James D. Conley*

+Most Reverend James D. Conley, S.T.L.  
Auxiliary Bishop of Denver

+ *Michael J. Sheridan*

+Most Reverend Michael J. Sheridan, S.T.D.  
Bishop of Colorado Springs