

Los Angeles archbishop unveils mobile app to help pregnant women

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Los Angeles

Archbishop Jose Gomez of Los Angeles has launched a digital app intended to offer resources, support and prayers for women and girls facing crisis pregnancies.

The unveiling took place Jan. 22, the 41st anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* decisions that legalized abortion nationwide.

"Today we are taking a big step to expand our circle of care and concern for unborn children and their mothers," Gomez said in a statement. "Through this app we are launching today, we are creating a network of prayer and practical support to help women facing crisis pregnancies."

He added, "This app will also engage Catholics and others, especially our young people, in the great spiritual work of praying and building a true culture of life here in Los Angeles and throughout our nation."

The app's creation was prompted by statistics from the Alan Guttmacher Institute that report about 1.2 million abortions per year. In Southern California, that translates to about 220 abortions daily.

The Southern California region covered by the app includes 78 pregnancy centers in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and neighboring dioceses that include Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Orange, San Diego, San Bernardino, Riverside and Imperial counties. People, pregnancy centers and pro-life resources nationwide are invited to register to be included in the database.

The app is available for smartphones and iPads by visiting www.optionsunited.org.

At the rollout of the app, Gomez was joined by two women who had abortions only to regret them later.

"I did not have my abortion because of freedom of choice," said Irene Beltran. "I had my abortion because I felt I had no freedom, no choice. I have suffered from depression, anxiety and an eating disorder. Abortion is not a quick fix, but instead a lifetime of consequences. Not just for the mother, but for her entire family."

Estella Pina said after her abortion she "began to drink heavily to suppress my feelings and soon began experimenting with drugs."

"I tried to convince myself that this day never happened," Pina said. "I began to call God for help. As I became more involved with pro-life, I learned about pro-life centers and how they help women with a crisis in pregnancy. I couldn't believe these types of centers existed. If only I had known I could have made a different choice."

"When a woman is pregnant and considering abortion, not only does she need help. But two people need help: mother and child," said Astrid Bennett, executive director of Los Angeles Pregnancy Services.

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