

Diocese of Austin

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Office of the Bishop

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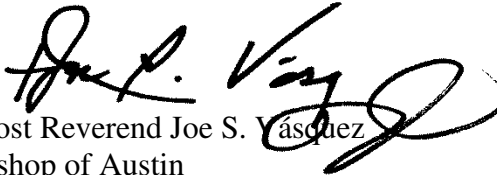
My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

We give thanks for the recent decision from Judge Lee Yeakel of the U.S. District Court in Austin voiding a city ordinance that affects pregnancy care facilities. Over four years ago, the Diocese of Austin learned that the City of Austin adopted an ordinance requiring local pregnancy resource centers to make specific statements by posting public notices. Knowing this ordinance was unnecessary and discriminatory against pregnancy resource centers which offer alternatives to abortion, we joined with others to challenge the ordinance as it violated our constitutional rights to free speech and was not in accordance with the tradition of our faith.

I am grateful for all those who worked and prayed for this effort, especially the legal team: Justice Raul Gonzalez, David Lill, and the attorneys at the Liberty Institute (Jeff Mateer, Hiram Sasser, Jonathan Saenz, and Erin Leu), as well as Deacon Ron Walker at the Diocese of Austin. I am also grateful to Marie Cehovin and her staff at the Office of Pro-Life Activities and Chaste Living of the Diocese of Austin, and Allison Cavazos and her staff of the Gabriel Project Life Center at Catholic Charities of Central Texas. At times, these legal proceedings were difficult and tiring, but this process enabled us to share about the work of the Gabriel Project Life Center, which performs its services in truth, love and mercy.

I pray that this victory motivates us to renew our commitment to protect religious liberty, and thank you for your dedication to build a culture of life and a civilization of compassion.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Joe S. Vásquez
Bishop of Austin

JSV:mj