

# **Statement of Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien on the Federal Court's Decision Affecting Baltimore Pro-Life Pregnancy Centers**

Today's court ruling is a clear victory both for pregnant women in need of assistance and for First Amendment principles we treasure in a free society.

In my homily at my Mass of Installation in October 2007, I challenged our Church and the citizens of our city and state when I said, "Abortion need not be an 'answer' in this Archdiocese." I begged women in crisis pregnancies to let us help them affirm life. An integral part of our response to a woman seeking help carrying her baby to term is the support provided by crisis pregnancy centers. In Baltimore, these centers assist thousands of women every year who are trying to embrace the gift of life in their unborn children. And this ruling allows the important and compassionate work of these pro-life pregnancy centers to continue without interference from Baltimore City which sought to target these centers because they are pro-life.

The ruling also upholds the constitutional rights under the first amendment that protect private citizens such as those who work and volunteer in pregnancy centers from having to convey a government-mandated message.