Reverence for Life Prayer

O Mary, bright dawn of the new world, Mother of the living,

to you do we entrust the cause of life.

Look down, O Mother, upon the vast numbers of

babies not allowed to be born, on the poor whose lives are made difficult,

on men and women who are victims of brutal violence,

on the elderly and the sick killed by indifference or out of misguided mercy.

Grant that all who believe in your Son may proclaim the Gospel of life

with honesty and love to the people of our time.

Obtain for them the grace to accept that Gospel as a gift ever new,

the joy of celebrating it with gratitude throughout their lives

and the courage to bear witness to it resolutely,

in order to build, together with all people of good will,

the civilization of truth and love, to the praise and glory of God,

the Creator and lover of life.

“Even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick,

the old, the unborn and the poor, are masterpieces

of God’s creation, made in his own image,

destined to live for ever, and deserving of the

utmost reverence and respect.”

Pope Francis, Communiqué to the CBCEW

(Bishops of Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales), July 17, 2013
We Need A Law

Pope John Paul II spend much of his papacy calling us to actively build a culture of life. Love is an invitation to receive life as a gift. Love calls us to protect every human life.

The ability to choose abortion or assisted suicide are falsely presented in our culture as marks of human progress; faith invites us to trust God with both unexpected pregnancy and the circumstances of our dying. The following words by Dr. Mary Deutscher give a faith perspective on the meaning of life: “From its earliest beginning to its final moment, we are called to celebrate the gift of life we have received from God. As Christians, we understand that we are stewards of this gift, not owners, and we are not in control of how our lives unfold.”

The Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI) reports that about 20% (a 2010 stat)of all abortions are performed on teens https://www.cahi.ca/en/ta_10_alldatatables20120417_en.pdf. Tragically, teens who abort are 2-4 times more likely to commit suicide than adult women who abort, and are 3 times more likely to be admitted to mental health hospitals http://www.christianliferesources.com/article/teen-abortion-risks-fact-sheet-1196.

In Canada today, teens are currently able to get an abortion without their parents' knowledge, even though consent from their parents is required if they wish to go to a tattoo parlour or a tanning salon. The We Need a Law initiative is petitioning the Provincial Government to pass the Parental Consent for Abortion Act. (See sk.parentalconsent.ca)

The Parental Consent for Abortion Act recognizes that teens should have support from their parents in making a decision and giving consent when facing a matter of such consequence. The Act also safeguards the role of parents to be informed and involved in their daughter's physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being.

If the law passes, the young woman will be informed of the requirement to receive her parent’s consent; if she is in a delicate or tumultuous family situation, she can give alternate consent through a judicial waiver. This ensures that parents are involved, alongside boyfriends, doctors, friends or teachers. In Texas, the rates of teen abortion dropped up to 20% in the years following the enactment of a parental consent law.

Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

Bill C-14 legalized euthanasia and assisted suicide when it became law in June, 2016. Note the following responses from Catholic leadership.

The President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops states: “No institution, person, ideology or legislation is entitled to threaten or undermine the sacredness of both the dignity of each individual person and the very gift of life itself.” As well, “Declaring physician-assisted suicide a ‘right’ is not true caring and not humane in the least. It is ultimately a false act of mercy, a distortion of kindness to our fellow man/woman.”

In their Pastoral Reflection, February 2, 2017, the Bishops of Saskatchewan wrote: “At each moment, the Word of God sent forth from the Father speaks to every human heart. This Word is Jesus Christ whose life and suffering, death and resurrection, reveal the pattern of our own journey back to the Father.” They go on to say that “The clausum of life, filled with many demands and distractions, often prevents us from hearing the voice of the Son. Illness, profound suffering, and the fear of death are also moments that make it difficult to attend the voice of Jesus.” They concluded, “From the cross, Jesus teaches us that death is not an ultimate escape or a release from unbearable pain... it is a moment of profound surrender to the Father and an entry into eternal life.” Pope John Paul II reminds us; “dying is also a part of life.”

The Bishops of Saskatchewan call us to live through our dying by:

1. Hearing the Good news: “In living through our dying, we share an experience with Jesus, who turned his suffering and death into self-offering which brings redemption.” God invites us to die well.
2. Doing the spiritual work of living through our dying: The spiritual works of this journey are forgiveness, love, and surrender. Mastering these works allows us to see death as a gift. Dying invites us to do the hard work of asking for and receiving forgiveness, expressing our love to others fiercely and unconditionally, and in the end, surrendering to God.
3. Seeking out the beauty and growth in relationships at the end of life: In receiving the gift of being cared for, the dying give the gift of allowing others to care. We are also reminded that our responsibility includes caring for the dying, accompanying those who grieve, and lifting the one who has died into the tender hands of God.

Faith does not ask us to die alone or in pain. Palliative/hospice care offers relief from pain and other distressing symptoms, where life is affirmed and dying is regarded as a normal and dignified process. It neither hastens nor prolongs death and integrates the psychological and spiritual aspects of patient care. It offers a support system to patient and family. There is not enough access to palliative/hospice care in Canada: especially in light of euthanasia and assisted suicide, we have much work to do ensuring that palliative/hospice care is available and that people know about it.