

Diocese of Saskatoon
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

100 – 5th Avenue North
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 2N7
web page: www.saskatoonrcdiocese.com

Phone: (306) 242-1500
Fax: (306) 244-6010

July 10, 2008

Dear Faithful of the Diocese of Saskatoon:

With the award of the Order of Canada to Dr. Henry Morgentaler the ongoing issue of abortion has once more come to the forefront of debate in our society.

As Catholic Christians, along with many others in our society, we firmly believe in the sanctity of life and the inalienable and primary right of every person to have that right respected from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death. The unborn, the most helpless amongst us in life's journey, deserve our protection in this first and fundamental right of a human being.

In light of this belief, the awarding of the Order of Canada to Dr. Henry Morgentaler is deeply dismaying to all those Canadians who uphold this belief. "Far from improving our country, Dr. Henry Morgentaler's actions continue to create controversy and division in our nation. In the name of freedom of choice, he has encouraged the development of a culture of death and has thus attacked the most vulnerable, the unborn". (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops).

In response to this situation, I invite you to consider the following:

1) Pray that the right to life of the unborn be respected in our country and that all come to freely embrace the value of life.

I include here a prayer intention brought forth by Archbishop Collins of Toronto. Please pray it individually and in your Sunday celebrations.

"That the scourge of abortion be lifted from our land, that those who promote it may be brought to a change of heart, that all who are tempted to abortion may be lovingly helped to protect the precious gift of life, and that all who have experienced an abortion may be comforted with the healing gift of love".

2) Become better informed about this issue of respect for life. A good source of reflection is the Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF), co-sponsored by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus. Their very informative website is www.colf.ca.

3) Become informed about the many services offered to those facing difficult situations around pregnancy, organizations such as Birthright and others who lovingly support women and families who are distressed by an unplanned pregnancy. Providing caring, non-judgmental support they are committed to help solve problems that might make it difficult for a pregnant woman to carry her baby to term. Support such organizations and agencies. Especially support girls and women

amongst your family and friends who are faced with such choices, helping them to make a choice for life and giving them all the love and assistance they need at this time.

4) Also become informed about and support such organizations as Rachel's Vineyard which was established to provide those who are hurting after an abortion with the opportunity to release deep feelings of anger, grief, ambivalence and guilt so as to find inner peace once more. For all who have had an abortion, the Church's door is always open for love and support including the grace of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

5) I encourage all who uphold the sanctity of life to encourage their political representatives (local, provincial and federal) to develop and support policies and programs which build up the culture of life for individuals, families and communities. Policies including (but not limited to) maternity benefits, daycare, paternity responsibilities, social assistance and many others have a serious impact on the daily realities for women who face an unplanned pregnancy. The gospel calls us to build a culture where the choice for life is not only available but is supported by the whole community.

6) Finally I also ask the faithful of the Diocese of Saskatoon and all who uphold the sanctity of life, to protest the awarding of the Order of Canada to Dr. Morgentaler. By letter, phone call, email or petition contact the Governor General, the Prime Minister and your Member of Parliament asking that the appropriate authorities reconsider this nomination and not award this distinction.

Thank you for your consideration of these matters of grave importance to our Canadian society and your cooperation in upholding the sanctity of God's greatest gift: the gift of life itself.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Rev. Albert LeGatt
Bishop of Saskatoon

AL:lc