

Pro-Life Bulletin Inserts

This packet contains full page inserts and cut-outs for parish bulletins, pro-life newsletters, etc. Some of these have saved lives of children who were scheduled for abortion.

Also enclosed in this pack are shorter inserts giving basic facts and insights about abortion. Use these inserts wherever you can further the pro-life cause.

May God bless your efforts to defend life!

Prepared by:

[Priests for Life Canada / Prêtres Pro-Vie Canada](#)

P.O. Box 31

Pembroke, ON K8A 6X1

Tel: 1-888-300-2007; in Ottawa and Fax: (613) 834-2226

E-mail: priests@priestsforlifecanada.com

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Questions for “Pro-Choicers”

In the debate about the morality and legality of abortion in Canada, those who would allow or support abortion describe themselves as “pro-choice”, while those who defend unborn children describe themselves as “pro-life”. Because of the high emotions that this issue stirs, it is difficult for opposing sides to discuss their disagreements calmly and rationally. It is crucial to know how to do so, however, when the occasion presents itself. Asking the following questions will help.

- 1 **Are you “pro-choice” throughout the pregnancy?** Many “pro-choicers” do not realize that a woman can legally obtain an abortion at *any* stage in her pregnancy. Persons who claim to be “pro-choice” are being ambiguous unless they indicate how much of a choice they favour. Is it OK to abort a baby at eight months? Many who support pro-choice in the first three months of pregnancy would consider abortion to be killing if done much later than that. Many pro-choicers have not thought through this issue. If the line limiting the choice is birth, then press them to consider whether the difference between birth and one day before birth really changes the issue. Pro-choicers who do not believe abortion should be allowed in the later stages of pregnancy should be honest enough to label their position more accurately by saying, for example, “pro-choice for the First Three Months,” and should help eliminate abortions in the later stage.
- 2 **Are you “pro-choice” on all issues?** If not, why not? If the value that pro-choicers uphold is really “choice” rather than abortion, then it stands to reason that they should champion “choice” wherever it can be applied. Do they favour “choice” in education, for example? Would they go so far as to uphold someone’s “choice” to use drugs, or to make racist remarks, or to drive through a red light? They should not just say “of course not,” rather, let them explain why not. It may become clear that they are more champions of life than of “choice”.
- 3 **Do you think a choice about abortion should be an informed choice?** If you support the choice of a woman to undergo the abortion procedure, should she not know what her choice involves? What does this procedure she is choosing really do? What are the risks and consequences? “Choice”, furthermore, implies that I am choosing between alternatives. Isn’t it more of a choice if the woman feels there are valid alternatives than if she feels that abortion is her only option? So, to be pro-choice should involve explaining and providing the other options. This does not eliminate the choice, it enhances it. She has more to choose from! Often a pregnant woman does not realize that by the time she goes for her abortion, the baby already has hands, feet, and a beating heart. To discover this after the abortion, when it is too late, is truly a betrayal of her freedom of choice.

Yet isn’t it amazing how “pro-choice” forces oppose legislation that would give women more of an understanding of what they are choosing?

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- 4 **Would you be just as happy if a woman chose life as if she chose abortion?** Not all “pro-choicers” would be equally happy. This question again probes the difference between those who want “choice” and those who want to promote the abortion industry as such, but use the word “choice” to cover up their less worthy motives. There are institutions inspired by a “eugenic” policy of eliminating the poor and “undesirable”. There are those who rejoice more in death and barrenness than in birth and life. There are many others whose sensitivity to “choice” is being exploited by those who have more on their agenda than choice itself.
- 5 **You are “pro-choice” of what?** This question gets to the heart of what abortion is and what the “pro-choicer” considers it **to be**. Some do not believe it is killing; others do, and support ‘choice’ anyway. Ask them to express what they are implying. Take their own words seriously. “Are you supporting a choice to kill a pre-born baby?” That is a fair question; you are simply asking them to clarify their position. If they claim abortion is not killing, you can ask whether they have studied the scientific evidence that shows it is. Ask further if they do not see the logic of an effort to stop the “choice” of abortion, if indeed the one making the effort sees it as killing. They may say you are wrong, but they cannot say you are illogical, inconsistent, or foolish.
- 6 **Is all choice good?** While the previous questions analyze what abortion is, this question analyzes what “choice” is. Obviously, not all choice is good. We can choose to do wrong, however you want to define what wrong is. The “goodness” or “badness” of choice depends on “what” is chosen. Choice is a process; what is chosen is the goal. Choice of a good goal is good; choice of a bad goal is bad. Some try to answer the question of whether abortion, as a goal or object of choice, is good or bad by focusing on the process of choosing it. That avoids the issue. To say that because “choice” is good. Therefore what I choose is good, is to end up in patent absurdity.

A Painful Choice

In discussing abortion, I have found that pro-choicers often have the idea that pro-lifers think it is an EASY matter for a woman to choose life or to choose an abortion. They feel we are insensitive to the pain, confusion, anguish, and torture that a woman may experience in making this choice. This impression may come to them because they hear us making a clear-cut moral judgement: abortion is ALWAYS wrong. It is indeed ALWAYS wrong. It is a moral absolute, and is never justified. We pro-lifers know this. We also know the pain and anguish of the pregnant woman in difficulty. If, in our discussions, we make it clear that we are aware of this anguish, and never minimize it, then we will break down a big barrier to discussion, and be better able to communicate the moral truth that life must always be chosen over death.

Abortion: Some Common Objections Answered

Following are statements some people make about abortion. Each one of them misses the point, which is that every abortion kills an innocent baby.

“The abortion issue has no place in the Church.” Then what does? Are people who Worship God supposed to be blind to injustice? Are believers supposed to be unconcerned about what goes on in the world? Abortion kills over 100,000 babies in Canada each year. In Church we say we believe in “the Lord, the Giver of Life”. Church is the place to talk about things that concern God, and God cares about the destruction of 100,000 babies a year. The Bible says that those who worship God but do not act to correct injustices are not pleasing God at all. (see Amos 5:21-27, and Isaah 1:10-17)

“We shouldn’t impose our beliefs on others.” Do you really think that to say “killing is wrong” is imposing a belief? Would you want people around you who have the opposite belief?

A society cannot run **if** it tolerates the killing of the innocent. Nor can it run if it tolerates stealing. These are basic aspects of human life, and are not exclusively tied to the beliefs of any one religious denomination. You do not have to be Catholic or religious at all to understand that killing the innocent is wrong. To speak up against it is not “imposing beliefs”; it is basic human decency.

“The woman should decide.” Decide what? Abortion is the killing of a baby. Nobody has the right to “decide” whether an innocent person should live or die. If we say that a woman can decide that an innocent baby should die, what is to prevent a person from deciding that an innocent parent should die, or that you should die? Once you say that the right to life depends on someone else’s “decision”, you have crossed a line into chaos and have put society on a collision course with itself. Women should not be helped to kill their babies; they should be helped to nurture them, and the pro-life movement does precisely that.

“Abortion is not a political issue.” In other words, “political issues” have nothing to do with protecting human lives? Why do people organize themselves politically? What is the purpose of government and of power? Abortion kills 100,000 babies a year in Canada and that is a serious, public issue involving human rights and human lives. It therefore involves those who are responsible for public policy. Government has a duty to protect its people, not to pretend that they aren’t people at all.

“I oppose abortion, but who am I to tell a woman she can’t do it”. Do you ever hear this reasoning applied to other violations of human rights? Let’s test it out. “I oppose bank robberies, but who am I to tell her she can’t do it?” That would be an interesting position especially if it were your bank! I oppose rape, but who am I to tell him he can’t do it? I oppose race riots, but...” and so on.

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If abortion kills a baby, then you have every right -- and duty -- to protect that baby, and also to protect that woman from a tragic decision which wounds her morally, psychologically, and physically. Who are you to tell her she can't have an abortion? You are a human being who has enough concern and courage to stand up to evil and say "No!"

"You might upset women who have had abortions." Yes, in talking about injustice, you might upset people who have stolen or cheated. In talking about unkindness, you might upset people who have been unkind. But issues that impact on our lives must be addressed.

Look at the other side. By NOT talking about abortion, you fail to help women who are tempted to make the same tragic mistake. By your silence, you also tell women who have had abortions that it was no big deal, and that you really don't care about the pain they now may have. Those who keep silent do what the pro-abortionists do, leaving these women alone with nothing but a wounded soul and a dead baby. Pro-lifers, instead, confront the evil. They assist the women who want to have their baby, and they help women who have had abortions to find forgiveness and peace.

"There are other issues." Sure there are, but only for people who are alive. The preborn babies are the people treated with MOST contempt, and so they need the MOST attention; they are the ones who are the MOST helpless, and so they need the MOST help; they are the ones dying in the LARGEST numbers, and so they need the LARGEST number of advocates.

Other issues are important because life is important. Poverty is an issue because the poor have a RIGHT TO LIVE. Unemployment is an issue because people have the right to work IN ORDER TO LIVE. It all comes back to LIFE. Abortion is the most direct attack on LIFE itself, at its most defenceless stage. To be concerned with other issues and NOT concerned about abortion is an absurdity.

Furthermore, the pro-life movement is falsely accused of caring "only" for the preborn. The facts show that pro-lifers are deeply concerned with mothers, and with ALL human life.

But there is a specific mission to protect the pre-born and to end abortion. Don't people have a right to dedicate themselves to that task without being judged? Since when is a group concerned for having a specific focus? Do we condemn groups that serve the deaf for not caring for the blind? Do we condemn those rescuing people from a burning building for not going to Africa to feed the starving? Nobody can do everything. That doesn't mean we don't care. Maybe it's time that as we live our lives, we all care a little more for the pre-born babies who may not have a chance in life at all.

Abortion: A Choice Against Women

Abortion is often presented as an issue of “women’s rights”. It is seen as something desirable for women and as a benefit to which they should have as much access as possible. In fact, to be “pro-life” is seen by some as being “against women’s rights”.

If you sometimes feel this way, examine the facts presented here. You will see that, in fact, abortion harms women, ignores their rights, and exploits and degrades them. Anyone concerned about women will do well to know these facts.

Surveys of women who have had abortions, (See for example: David Reardoff’s book, *Aborted Women, Silent No More*), show that abortion is not a question of giving a woman a “choice”. It is, tragically a situation of women feeling they have NO CHOICE, feeling that nobody cares enough about them and their child to give them any alternative besides going to the abortionist. The woman feels rejected, confused, afraid, alone, unable to handle the pregnancy-- and behold, in the midst of all this, she is told by society. “We will eliminate your problem by eliminating your child. Go get an abortion. It’s a safe, easy, and legal solution”

The fact is that though abortion is legal, it is NOT safe and easy, nor respectful of the woman.

Carol Everett used to run an abortion clinic. She is now pro-life, and she tells how women are not given the truth about the abortion procedure. When they ask, “Will it be painful?” they are told “No”, even though serious pain is involved. When they ask, “Is it a baby?” they are told “No”. Many women have found out only AFTER their abortion that their baby already had arms, legs, and sucked its thumb, before they aborted it. The clinic workers are told not to volunteer any other information if they are not asked. Why can’t we respect women enough to tell them the whole truth?

Women are not told of the many harmful physical and psychological effects of abortion. It is NOT safe. There are, for example, fifteen psychological risk factors that need to be investigated before this procedure takes place. They usually aren’t. Women who have abortions are twice as likely to have a miscarriage if they get pregnant again. One of the reasons for this is cervical incompetence. During an abortion the cervical muscle is hastily stretched open, and hence can be rendered too weak to stay closed for another pregnancy. Another complication is ectopic pregnancy, a life-threatening situation in which, due to scar tissue in the womb from the scraping of the abortion, a fertilized ovum is blocked from entering the uterus and so begins growing in the fallopian tube and eventually ruptures it. Many other physical complications can arise, as the following chart shows. It has also been proven that complications and deaths of women from abortions are UNDER REPORTED and recorded under different causes than abortion.

Psychological effects are also very real. Women suffer from PAS (Post Abortion Syndrome). They experience impacted grief; that is, grief which festers within because

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they and others deny that a real death has occurred Because of this denial, mourning cannot properly occur, yet the pain of loss is still there. Many have flashbacks to the abortion experience, nightmares about the baby, and even pain on the anniversary of the due date. One woman testified that she still suffers from an abortion of 50 years ago! Nobody concerned about women can responsibly dismiss these facts.

Physical Effects	Psychological Effects
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sterility • Miscarriages • Ectopic pregnancies • Stillbirths • Bleeding and infections • Shock and comas • Perforated uterus • Peritonitis • Fever / Cold sweat • Intense pain • Loss of body organs • Crying / Sighing • Insomnia • Loss of appetite • Exhaustion • Weight loss • Nervousness • Decreased work capacity • Vomiting • Gastrointestinal disturbances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guilt • Suicidal impulses • Mourning/Withdrawal • Regret/Remorse • Loss of confidence • Low self esteem • Preoccupation with death • Hostility stage • Despair/Helplessness • Desire to remember birth date • Intense interest in babies • Thwarted maternal instincts • Hatred for persons connected with abortion • Desire to end relationship with partner • Loss of sexual interest/Frigidity • Inability to forgive self • Nightmares • Seizures and tremors • Feeling of being exploited • Horror of child abuse

Effects of Abortion: Prepared by Women Exploited by Abortion (WEBA), as a warning to other women to avoid the risks of abortion surgery.

What kind of concern for women is shown when we put more stress on killing the child than helping the woman to bear her child? The abortion mentality looks on pregnancy as a disease. It does not take women seriously in their unique privilege and power of bearing new life! Some say that the pro-life movement is run by men trying to control women but did you ever realize that the abortion industry is run primarily by men, who make a lot of money by performing this degrading operation on women? Abortion does not take sex seriously, either. Instead, it makes it easier for men to exploit women sexually. As Rosemary Bottcher, a Feminist for Life, has written, "Abortion reduces women to the status of sex machines which can be "repaired" if necessary. Abortion helps ease his (the man's) anxiety about sex and relieves him of the last vestige of responsibility. At last sex is really free!"

Let's stop fooling ourselves that abortion is a woman's right. The pro-life movement offers women many centres throughout the country where they can find compassion, assistance, and real alternatives and life-giving choices. The abortion movement offers them no choice except a wounded body, a scarred mind, and a dead baby. The choice is obvious.

CORRECT LANGUAGE ABOUT PREGNANCY AND ABORTION

When a woman is pregnant, people often say she is “expecting a child” or is “going to have a baby” or is “going to be a mother”. We all use these expressions from force of habit, and using them has no reflection on the strength of our pro-life convictions.

Nevertheless, may I suggest that we no longer use these phrases. They do not accurately describe what is happening.

A woman who is pregnant is not “expecting” a child. She already has one. The child exists, is living and growing in her womb. She is not about to bring the child “into the world”. The child is already in the world. The mother’s womb is as much in the world as the mother herself.

The pregnant woman is not “going to be” a mother. She already is a mother. By saying she is “going to be” a mother, we inadvertently reinforce the notion that motherhood begins at birth. This reinforces the idea that the child really is a child only at birth.

A pregnant woman is fully a mother. She does not have “*half*” a child or a child “on the way”. (“On the way” from where?) The child is here, already in the world, fully unique and in possession of the same dignity as every other person.

If our language reflects this reality, we will help the world to understand that children in the womb are indeed members of the human family - right here and now.

People will then be able to ask the right question about abortion.

The reasons many give in support of abortion, and the reasons many obtain abortions, focus on the question. “Should she have another child?” Issues such as partner support, maturity, and resources are discussed. When we say “no abortion”, they hear us saying, “Have a child no matter what”. They conclude we are unrealistic or insensitive to the real-life plight of the woman.

But the question here is NOT, “Should she have another child?” Our answer to that question can sometimes be “no”. There can be circumstances - medical, financial, and social - in which a person should not have another child.

If, however, a woman is pregnant, she already has a child. There is no longer a question about whether this child will come into existence. The only honest question or choice left at this point is, “Will this child be cared for or will this child be killed?” While we can sometimes say that circumstance dictate not having another child, we can never say that circumstance dictate killing a child.

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Unless people distinguish the question of “having a child” from “killing a child you have”, they will not even begin honestly evaluating abortion, and will argue past each other.

We are in fact very sensitive to circumstances such as immaturity, or lack of resources to raise a child. Were the child born, however, would the problems of immaturity or lack of resources disappear the day after birth? Yet on that day, just about everyone can see that killing the child is not justified. What makes abortion different? What is the difference between killing the child before or after birth to solve the problems? It’s the same woman, the same problems, and the same child. There is no difference in reality. There is only a different question.

CAN THE BIRTH CONTROL PILL CAUSE AN ABORTION?

Q. So how do you prove that the pill acts as an abortifacient? The answer to this question can be found by comparing the rate of break-through ovulation and the detected pregnancy rate. The ovulation rate has been reported to be about 27 ovulations in 100 women using the pill for one year. But the detected pregnancy rate is much lower at around 4 pregnancies per 100 women using the pill for one year. As you can see, there is a big difference between the number of women who ovulation (27) and the number of detected pregnancies (4). What has happened within the woman’s body to reduce the high ovulation rate to such a low number of detected pregnancies? I suggest that one answer to this important question is that pregnancies have begun, because ovulation and fertilization have occurred, but some of these pregnancies are terminated because implantation cannot take place. The pill has damaged the lining of the womb, stopping implantation.

John Wilks B.Pharm. M.P.S., M.A.C.P.P. Oct 1998

CAN THE MORNING AFTER PILL CAUSE AN ABORTION?

Q. What about the morning-after pill? Doesn’t it work by stopping pregnancy? The morning-after pill is a very high dose of the two female hormones called oestrogen and progesterone. A woman takes a dose of progesterone in the ‘morning-after pill’ which is 10-20 times the amount of progesterone she would get via a daily birth control tablet. The dose of oestrogen from the morning-after pill is also very high: about 5 times the amount she gets from a daily birth control tablet. As you can see, these doses are much greater than the daily birth control pill dose. Now if the birth control pill can act as a chemical abortifacient in low doses, it would seem reasonable that the morning-after pill would also act as an abortifacient.

John Wilks B.Pharm. M.P.S., M.A.C.P.P. Oct 1998

EDUCATION POINTS ON RU-486

Those pushing RU-486 are hoping to have it available in Canada. There are some basic things we and our congregations need to know about it.

1. It is not completely accurate to call RU-486 an abortion “pill”. It is, rather, a technique involving a combination of powerful synthetic steroids and arrangements for possible backup surgery. RU-486 must be taken in conjunction with prostaglandins, which induce uterine contractions. In countries where it is used, women must agree to have a surgical abortion in the cases where this drug technique does not succeed in aborting the baby.
2. If RU-486 is permitted, it will increase the numbers of abortions and of abortion providers. Most Canadians believe there are too many abortions as it is.
3. RU-486 has been known to harm and kill women. Its long-range effects on women and their born children are still unknown. They won't be known until at least a generation has passed. The entire first generation of users will be the guinea pigs. We may be dealing with a chemical time-bomb.
4. RU-486 has no proven purpose or benefit except to kill a developing child in the womb. Dr. Bernard Nathanson, upon investigating other claimed benefits of the drug, says that those claims are built on very shaky scientific ground.
5. RU-486 does not privatize or simplify abortion. In countries where it is used, multiple visits to the facility are required. The drug is not taken home, but administered only on the premises, where emergency medical equipment is ready to deal with side-effects. The woman must return 48 hours later to take the prostaglandin. Another visit is required to verify that the child is in fact gone.
6. Where does the child go? The RU-486 process makes this an open question. The child may be expelled at any time, any place, and the mother is more likely to see her tiny, dead baby. Edouard Sakil, as president of the Roussel-Uclaf company that made the drug, says that using it is “an appalling psychological ordeal. It is not at all easy to use.”
7. RU-486 will not replace all surgical abortions. One reason is that it can only be used in a small window of the pregnancy (5-7 weeks, or at most 5-9 weeks). In France, furthermore, only 25-30% of women seeking abortion choose the RU486 method.

Let us educate ourselves and our people on this added threat to women and children- One nurse who took part in RU-486 testing saw the surgical dishes with the expelled embryos, and said, “It was like looking at a little row of people... It was very upsetting... I hope I never, never have to do it again.” Don't we all?

THIS IS MY BODY

Did you ever realize that the same four words that were used by the Lord Jesus to save the world are also used by some to promote abortion? “This is my body”, the same simple words are spoken from opposite ends of the universe, with meanings that are directly contrary to each other.

Scripture tells us that on the night before He died to save all people, the Lord Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke It, and gave it to His disciples, saying, “This is My Body, which is given up for you.” He was pointing to what would happen the next day, when He would give that same Body on the cross. He sacrifices Himself so that we may live. He gives up His Body so that He can destroy the power of sin and death. As a result, He welcomes us into His life, into His Kingdom. He makes us members of His Body!

On the other hand, abortion supporters say, “This is my body. So don’t interfere with it! It’s mine, so I can do what I want, even to the point of killing the life within it. All is secondary to my dominion over my body.” In fact one abortion supporter has written, “I say their (pro-lifers) God is worth nothing compared to my body” (Michelle Goldberg, “*Rant for Choice*,” in University of Buffalo student newspaper, 1995).

“This is my body.” Same words, different results. Christ gives His body away so others might live, abortion supporters cling to their own bodies so others might die. In giving His Body, Christ teaches the meaning of love: I sacrifice myself for the good of the other person. Abortion teaches the opposite of love: I sacrifice the other person for the good of myself!

“This is my body.” If, indeed, our body is ours, then let’s ask the next question: Why? The answer is so that we can give our body, our life, ourselves, away in love to one another and to God. Christ declares, “Do this in memory of me”. He calls us to do what He did, and that is precisely how we reverse the dynamic of abortion. Mom and Dad must say to their child, “This is my body, my life, given for you”, rather than, “This is my body, my life, so go away!”

“Human happiness and fulfillment are never found by pushing other people out of the way. They are found when we push ourselves out of the way.”

“This is my body”. It is no accident that the same words are used for such different purposes. A spiritual conflict rages here. We win, in our own lives and in the world, by living these words in self-giving, life-giving love.

What We Can Do To Stop Abortion

Pray daily for an end to abortion, for women tempted to have abortions, for doctors and nurses, for legislators, for clergy, for those who work in the pro-life movement, and for those who do not realize how wrong abortion is. Acts of fasting and mortification are valuable also.

1. Read! Be more informed about abortion. Pro-life information is available at your local Pro-life office.
2. Wear the “Precious Feet” pin which shows the baby’s feet at 10 weeks after conception. (Available from your local Pro-life office or Life Cycle Books, 1 - 800-214-5849.) You can also wear the pro-life red rose.
3. Use pro-life pins, decals, envelopes, bumper stickers, T-shirts, posters, etc.
4. Take part in pro-life street activities such as Life Chains, prayer vigils, literature distribution, pickets, and sidewalk counselling.
5. Write letters to newspapers, elected officials, and other persons and institutions regarding respect for life. This may sometimes be done by large groups of people all at once, to create more attention.
6. Speak up with courage and charity in defence of pre-born babies.
7. Encourage your priest to speak out against abortion. Obtain the pamphlets “How to Encourage Your Priest to be Actively Pro-Life” (#P9604a) and “A Letter to My Priest About the Abortion Crisis” (#P9605a) from Priests for Life, Canada.
8. Book announced Masses for the intention of an end to abortion.
9. Find out your doctor’s position on abortion. If he/she does abortions, express your disapproval by switching to a pro-life doctor. If a hospital near you does abortions, express your disapproval and use another hospital.
10. Find out who the local abortionists are. (Some of them do it on the side.) Let them know your opposition to abortion. Pray for them by name.
11. Take part in local projects and pro-life activities. For information, contact your parish or local pro-life group. Join in pro-life scripture or rosary services or prayer groups.
12. Distribute pro-life literature in public places, through the mail, on cars, etc.
13. Help to counsel women who are tempted to have abortions.
14. Support a local Crisis Pregnancy Center with donations of baby/maternity clothes and other needed items. If there is not a center near you, help to start one.
15. Get on the mailing lists of pro-life organizations. Donate to them.
16. Find out whether candidates running for public office support abortion. Help with voter registration and education.

17. Any woman who is pregnant and in need can turn for help to the pro-life movement. She never has to feel that abortion is the only option. Refer women in crisis to your parish priest or local Pro-life group.
18. Spread the word that forgiveness, healing, counselling, and support groups are available for women who have had abortions.
19. Spread the word about the harmful effects of abortion.
20. Donate pro-life books to your local libraries, schools, and colleges.
21. Get pro-life programs onto local cable TV stations. Refer to local Pro-life groups for support.
22. Promote adoption.

Freedom to Die?

“Freedom” is a highly cherished value in our society, not only in all aspects of life, but increasingly in aspects of death as well. The chant, “My life is mine” has also become, “My death is mine.” There is a move in our country and in the world to permit the terminally ill to end their lives through euthanasia. Some claim that it is the ultimate civil liberty to decide the time and manner of one’s own death. (A moment’s thought about that idea, however, reveals its absurdity.)

For a Christian, however, is “my life” really “mine?” Is my death really mine? The answer has to be yes and no. It is mine in the sense that it has been given to me and nobody else; it is not mine alone, however, because I am not the source of my own existence, and I am accountable for it to another, namely, God. “You are not your own,” St. Paul declares. (1 Cor. 6:19) “If we live, we are responsible to the Lord, and when we die we are responsible to the Lord. Both in life and in death we belong to the Lord.” (See Romans 14:18) Not one of us decided the time or manner in which we came into this world. Our life is a sacred gift from God, and only He can give it. It is therefore His right alone to take us out of this world.

We do not possess a “right to die”. A right is a moral claim. We do not have a claim on death; rather, death has a claim on us! Some see the “right to die” as parallel to the “right to life”. In fact, however, they are opposite. The “right to life” is based on the fact that life is a gift which we do not possess as a piece of property (which we can purchase or sell or give away or destroy at will), but rather is an inviolable right. It cannot be taken away by another or by the person him/herself. The “right to die” is based, rather, on the idea of life as a “thing we possess” and may discard when it no longer meets our satisfaction. “Right to die” thinking says there is such a thing as a “life not worth living”. For a Christian, however, life is worthy in and of itself, and not because it meets certain criteria that we or others set.

Must we, then, in the case of terminal illness, do everything and anything possible to stay alive, despite the condition we may be in? **The answer to this is a clear NO.** **There** is no law of any state or religion which says that we must stay alive at any cost. Death is an inevitable part of life, and when it is clear that God is calling us from this life, we accept His summons with faith. We firmly believe as Christians that life on this earth is not our final destiny or our highest good. “Our citizenship is in heaven.” (Phil. 3:20) “We have here no lasting city, but are seeking that which is to come.” (Heb. 13:14) All of our activities on earth, in fact, are meant to bring us closer to our true goal, union with God. In some circumstances, prolonging life would not serve that purpose, and may, because of severe burdens, hinder a person from drawing closer to God.

So the question is, “Where do we draw the line?” In serious illness, what means of treatment are we obliged to use, and what are we not required to use?

The means we use have traditionally been classified as either “ordinary” or

“extraordinary”. “Ordinary” means must always be used. This is any treatment or procedure which provides some benefit to the patient without excessive burden or hardship. “Extraordinary” means are optional. These are measures which do present an excessive burden, or simply do no good for the patient.

The distinction here is NOT between “artificial” and “natural.” Many artificial treatments will be “ordinary” means in the moral sense, as long as they provide some benefit without excessive burden. It depends, of course, on the specific case in point, with all its medical details. We cannot figure out ahead of time, in other words, whether or not we ourselves or a relative want some specific treatment to be used on us “when the time comes,” because we do not know in advance what our medical situation will be at the time. When the time does come, however, we must consult on the medical and moral aspects of the situation. Remember, procedures providing benefit without unreasonable hardship are obligatory; others are not. You should consult your clergyman when the situations arise.

What is never permitted, however, is any act or omission which causes, or is intended to cause, death, in order to remove a person from suffering. This is “euthanasia,” sometimes called “mercy killing.” We cannot take the life of another person, or our own, no matter what the good consequences may be. Most people who think euthanasia is a good idea are motivated by the fear of pain and the loss of control they will experience in terminal illness. Yet pain control in modern medicine has made very great progress; there are very few situations in which pain cannot be managed medically. Regarding control over our life, we need to adopt the approach that if we cannot cure, we care. Caring comes through the presence of loving, concerned people with whom the sick can share their thoughts and feelings and from whom they can receive respect and care for their emotional and spiritual needs even in the worst physical conditions. To give “dignity” to the dying is to always respect them as human persons with an eternal destiny, not to push for the option to kill them. A Christian, moreover, knows that suffering is not meaningless. It was by his suffering and cross that Christ redeemed the world. A Christian joins his/her suffering to Christ’s, and has a part to play in saving the world as well.

One of the leading advocates of euthanasia, Derek Humphrey, writes, “The 1990’s is the decade when the issue of voluntary euthanasia for the terminally ill will be decided.” (*Dying With Dignity*, p. 19) Christians must become more informed on this issue, and speak and act so that the issue is not only decided, but decided rightly. May God give us the wisdom and strength we will need.

Short Pro-Life Statements for your Bulletin

These pro-life messages can be included, week by week, in the Sunday bulletin or in your newsletter to spread pro-life awareness!

<p>Those who have had abortions need not despair. The Church is ready to help you find forgiveness and healing. Speak to your parish priest!</p>		
<p>Abortion kills your Brothers and Sisters!</p>	<p>Thanks, Mom, for choosing LIFE! It's the natural choice.</p>	<p>We brake for animals, we save live seals, we preserve the whales... but we kill our unborn children.</p>
<p>I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. <i>(Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor)</i></p>	<p>Pro-Lifers offer thousands of care centres for pregnant women. All that pro-abortionists offer is a wounded soul and a dead baby. And they call it a "right".</p>	<p>The baby's heart begins to beat between 18 and 24 days after conception! If a heartbeat means life, what do TWO heartbeats mean?</p>
<p>You were once an unborn baby Stop abortion!</p>	<p>Abortion is killing our future.</p>	<p>CHOOSE LIFE!</p>
<p>"Choice" is a process we use to arrive at a goal. The question is not "choice" or "no choice", the question is "What are we choosing? Is the choice good?"</p>	<p>Abortion is not a private issue. It is public because it involves the killing of an innocent baby. That's everybody's business!</p>	<p>Pro-Lifers are "the abolitionists of be 20th Century!" <i>(Cardinal O'Connor)</i></p>
<p>The # 1 Killer in Canada is Abortion!</p>	<p>Choose Life!</p>	<p>Without life, what other "issues" exist?</p>

Unborn babies have no voice but ours!	We can LIVE without abortion!	Abortion = a wounded woman and a dead baby!
STOP ABORTION!	Unborn babies are God's babies.	Abortion Stops a Beating Heart 300 Times a Day in Canada!
“Over the last 18 years, real time ultrasonography, fetoscopy, study of the fetal EKG and EEG have demonstrated the remarkable responsiveness of the human fetus to pain, touch, and sound.” <i>from a letter by 26 medical experts to US President Ronald Reagan, February 13, 1984)</i>	Michigan doctors used to take the Hippocratic Oath, which says in part, “I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked nor suggest such counsel, and in like manner, will not give to a woman a pessary to <u>produce abortion.</u> ”	Dr. And Mrs. J.C Wilke have lectured and written on abortion throughout the world for two decades. They write, “During this entire time we have never heard or read about a single documented case of an abortion induced by a coat hanger”.
Pregnancy is not a disease. It is a power, a glory, and a privilege beyond measure.	“Abortion can be a painful, heart-wrenching trip.”	A consistent pro-lifer rejects violence. A “pro-choicer” allows violence against babies in the womb consistently.
The baby who lives in the womb is the same baby born from the womb.	Abortion kills.	Pro-Life work is true generosity and unselfishness -- They are loving people (the unborn) who can't love you back”
After hearing expert medical testimony about when life begins, Judge Michael Noonan ruled that abortion is “the legal execution of a human being”. (<i>Loce Case, New Jersey, 1991)</i>	“Unwanted” is not a quality of a baby; it is an attitude of the parents. Don't kill a baby for its parents' problem.	The most important thing you can do for pro-life is to become PERSONALLY INVOLVED . Unless you do, nothing will change.

<p>Your Silence Is Required For The Killing To Continue. Stop abortion by speaking out now!</p>	<p>Thousands of Canadians are waiting to adopt children. CHOOSE LIFE!</p>	<p>At the judgement, God will look at your pro-life efforts and say not, "Did you succeed?" but "Did you try?"</p>
<p>Give the babies a choice, too!</p>	<p>Some clamour for "choice" when it comes to abortion, yet we never hear about "choice" when it comes to child abuse!</p>	<p>There can be no Peace on Earth until there is Peace in the Womb. Stop Abortion! Women deserve a better choice than abortion.</p>
<p>Unwanted pregnancies do not mean unwanted children!</p>	<p>Unborn babies cannot speak, protest, picket, vote, or pray. They have no voice but yours!</p>	<p>The womb: the most dangerous place in the Canada.</p>
<p>The right to choose to smoke is restricted if it violates the rights (of non-smokers. Yet the so-called "right" to abortion ALWAYS violates the rights of the aborted baby.</p>	<p>It is easier to scrape the baby out of the mother's womb than to scrape the memory of the baby out of her mind.</p>	<p>Rape does not justify abortion. The baby should not have to pay with his/her life for someone else's actions.</p>
<p>Isn't it ironic that those who try to save babies from abortion are often ridiculed, while those who kill them are said to be providing services.</p>	<p>"There has not been a single organization of parents of mentally retarded children that has ever endorsed abortion." (<i>R. Craig to Ohio Legislature, 1971</i>)</p>	<p>To be pro life is not to love the child and forget the mother. It is rather to ask, "Why can't we love them both?"</p>
<p>"Some call for abortion of handicapped babies. Yet studies show there is NO difference between handicapped and normal persons in their degree of life satisfaction." (<i>W. Peacock, Issues in Law & Medicine, 1987</i>)</p>	<p>ABORTIONS ARE COMPLETELY LEGAL IN CANADA AT ANY TIME BEFORE BIRTH, AND FOR ANY OR NO REASON!</p>	<p>You did not come from a fetus any more than you came from a little child or a teenager. You WERE a teenager, you WERE a child, you WERE a fetus. A fetus is a real person!</p>
<p>Brain waves can be detected in a baby at only 6 weeks after conception.</p>	<p>God is Pro-life!</p>	<p>Take My Hand, Not My Life.</p>

Abortion Stops A Beating Heart.	Life Is Precious!	Celebrate Life!
Thank God Your Mom Was Pro-Life!	I love children – Born and Unborn!	Choose Life – God did!
I'm Glad You Were Born.	Human Rights Begin With Human Life	Any Right To Choose Depends On What's Being Chosen
Your Silence Is Golden For The Abortion Industry	Love Life!	Pregnancy Isn't A Disease.
All Babies Choose To Live.	Silence Grants Permission. Speak out against abortion!	Research is OK but not at the cost of human life. Embryonic Stem Cell Research kills an unborn child!
Adult stem cell research is OK but Embryonic stem cell research kills a life.	Embryonic Stem Cell research kills a human life!	Death comes soon enough without Euthanasia.
Euthanasia is wrong... no matter how it's done!	Mercy Killing is wrong... no matter how it's done!	Assisted Suicide is Killing... no matter what!

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[Priests for Life Canada / Prêtres Pro-Vie Canada](#)

P.O. Box 31
Pembroke, ON K8A 6X1
Tel: 1-888-300-2007 in Ottawa and Fax: (613) 834-2226
E-mail: priests@priestsforlifecanada.com