



40 YEARS OF ABORTION: URGENT TIME FOR A PUBLIC DEBATE

*Message on the occasion of the National March for Life
Ottawa, May 14, 2009*

Over the 40 years since abortion was decriminalized in Canada, and over the more than 20 years since the Supreme Court of Canada created a juridical void that makes abortion possible through all nine months of pregnancy, what arguments have not yet been made to show the evil and illogic of destroying the most innocent and vulnerable of human beings, our future citizens? Which facts about the humanity of the unborn child and about the harm of abortion to women, children, families and society have yet to become clear?

It has all been said, it has all been shown. Indeed, it has become impossible to deny the truth about this cruel practice unworthy of a nation that claims to protect human rights. But rather than dealing with the truth, our society continues to ignore it. We have collectively descended into an unresolved ethical schizophrenia where doctors employ their powers to save tiny premature babies in intensive care units while ending the lives of even more developed babies in the womb. We shut our eyes to the reality that while some mothers marvel at 4-dimensional ultrasound pictures of their unborn babies and follow their weekly development on pregnancy websites, others are told those same unborn babies are not yet human, do not have a right to life, and can be eliminated. We chant that abortion is a woman's right, but we ignore the witness of countless women who testify that abortion has ruined their lives.

Come and march for life!

How long will Canadian society sustain such a blatant split personality? The answer is simple: for as long as we choose to be silent about the truth regarding life. Abortion has failed in reasoned debate, and the arguments used to defend it have been disproved by scientific evidence. Unlimited abortion has not gathered the support of a majority of Canadians, but it hangs on because of public indifference and silence, as well as a widespread lack of information about the full extent of Canada's juridical void on abortion, due in no small part to a silence on this topic by most media.

This is why now more than ever, we need to reopen the public debate in Parliament, in the media, and in our communities. There has never been a better time to question whether Canadian society has gone too far: in numerous surveys, citizens tell us that it has. The possibility for change is very real, and it will come about if we accept our social responsibility and speak up for the unborn. Every voice is needed, not later but now.

Speaking up means not only engaging in verbal and written debate and contacting Members of Parliament, but becoming a visible and united front. This is why the Catholic Organization for Life and Family would like to strongly encourage all Canadians who believe in ending the juridical void in Canada over abortion to join in the **National March for Life** in Ottawa on May 14, 2009. Gathering in ever greater numbers on Parliament Hill would clearly show our MPs and national media that we are serious about protecting unborn human life. For those who cannot join us in Ottawa, we invite you to participate in one of the numerous Marches for Life that are being held in other cities across the country.

Speaking up

Speaking up also means confronting attempts at the suppression of our message. We need to be prepared to defend our freedoms, including our freedom of speech, as protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Serious challenges have recently been faced in this regard by pro-life clubs at several universities, where student unions have attacked or even revoked the club status of these groups. Pro-life organizations have also encountered attempts to suppress their pro-life ads, and pro-life speakers have been shouted out on campuses.

Of special concern are also the recent attempts of certain provincial professional bodies of physicians and surgeons to impose upon all their members the duty to refer for abortion. We resolutely object to such disturbing efforts to force doctors to ignore their conscience. In the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr., we cannot let these attempts succeed in violating the Charter rights of pro-life Canadian citizens and suppressing pro-life views, speech and actions. Nor can we be turned back by the morally exhausted argument that a pro-life view is mere religious opinion. On the contrary, we know that human reason, science and human experience are on our side, and that speaking up on a matter of fundamental human rights is our duty as concerned citizens.

And now, assisted suicide

As we re-ignite the public debate on abortion, it is important to keep in mind the inter-connectedness of the challenges facing us today. One such challenge is the threat posed to human life through euthanasia and assisted suicide. There are indications that another bill will soon be introduced in Parliament, seeking to legalize these practices. The law can never justly violate fundamental human rights, which include first and foremost, the foundational right to life of every human being from conception to natural death.

Building a culture of life can never be separated from efforts to cultivate a civilization of love. Therefore, there is also today a great need in our society for a new recognition of the value and importance of the natural institutions of marriage and the family. We invite all Canadians to discover the revolutionary teaching of Pope John Paul II's "theology of the body", which integrates a profound understanding of motherhood, fatherhood and the family, as well as the meaning and purpose of human sexuality. In supporting healthy families founded on marriage, we build a society that is better prepared to welcome, respect and value unborn human life.

For more information:

Michèle Boulva
Director
Catholic Organization for Life and Family
613-241-9461, ext. 141
Email: mboulva@colf.ca

May 4, 2009