

# In Defence of Life

## Edmonton ProLife's Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 1

'educating for life'

Winter, 2003/4

### Till death do us part...

#### Paula Rebstock

President of Edmonton ProLife

On October 15, 2003, the feeding/hydration tube was removed from Terri Schiavo in a hospice in Florida. The court had ruled in favour of her husband. Food and drink were ruled out of order. Terri Schiavo was to be left to die. For Terri, "till death do us part" had taken on an ominous twist. Six days later, however, the Florida Legislature passed *Terri's Bill* that suspended dehydrations contested by families.

During the fall of 2003, Terri Schiavo's fight for the right to life had gone very public. The public support of Terri and her right to receive care had put to the forefront the questions of life and death. What it is to be human? What it is to be cared for? Terri and her parents have given a face to these questions. They are not theoretical. They are very personal.

In this issue, we have made Terri's fight the focal point to the questions of end of life issues. Please take time to read about Terri Schiavo. We have in the Edmonton area a champion for the rights of the disabled, Mark Pickup. Mark brought Terri's fight to Canada. He advocated on behalf of Terri, and encouraged us to do the same. We weren't fighting for an issue. We were fighting for Terri. In this issue, Mark writes about the need for significant communities.

Edmonton ProLife's mandate is to promote respect for all human life from conception to natural death. Abortion and Euthanasia are but two very real manifestations of a cultural malaise arising from a profound philosophical distortion of what it is to be a human being. The restoration of the rights and dignity

of all human beings will not be possible without the restoration of the understanding of what it truly means to be human. This is a cultural battle we are engaged in: the culture of life versus the culture of death. To win this battle, we must win the hearts and minds of the nation. We must understand the problem. It is abortion, It is euthanasia. It is all this but so much more. And without understanding the more, we will continue to fight hard with little success.

Last year, Edmonton ProLife purchased a copy of the *Life Principles* Video Series. (see August 2003 newsletter review at [www.edmontonprolife.com](http://www.edmontonprolife.com)) The reviews have been excellent. We now have three sets and another twelve have been purchased through the office by interested educators, pro-life groups, families, schools, and churches. If you are at all interested to know more about the *Life Principles* Series, please give me a call at the office. On Saturday, January 17, 2004 EPL will host a one day workshop on the series. I strongly recommend parents, students and educators to attend.

I write this letter with Christmas just days away. In the rush of this season, it seems so easy to forget the time of Advent: the wait for the birth of a child. During these days leading up to Christmas, my wish is that good people everywhere take time to contemplate the mystery of baby Jesus, first in his mother's womb, one precious cell, growing through all the wonderful stages of nine months of fetal life, and then being born a helpless baby in need of the care of others.

On behalf of the board of Edmonton ProLife, and our office manager Karen, I wish you all a most holy and joyful Christmas. To all our pro-life friends of all faiths, we wish you a very happy holiday season with family and friends.

God Bless Everyone!



#### Inside this Issue

- 1 – President's Message
- 2 – Life Principles Workshop, Calendar of Events, EPL Board
- 3 – Review: *Healing the Culture*, Our Sponsors
- 4 – New Brunswick Morgentaler Case, Life Sites, Walkathon
- 5 – Life Issues Lexicon
- 6 – Terri Schiavo, Mark Pickup: A courageous activist for life
- 7 – Mark Pickup (continued), Power of Attorney Form
- 8 – Letter to Santa, Membership Form

# Life Principles Workshop

On **Saturday, January 17, 2004**, Edmonton ProLife is holding a *Life Principles* Workshop from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. Our president, Paula Rebstock, will present an overview of the *Life Principles*: “a rational ground for the pro-life understanding of what it means to be a person.”

Camille de Blasi, director of *Life Principles* for Human Life of Washington, comments on the series:

*Life Principles* develops “a heightened awareness among nearly all audiences that there’s something fuller to the discussions of abortion and euthanasia that is not usually addressed but should be.”

“...audiences consistently react with great interest, hunger, and often awe. (They) are delighted to understand the pro-life message in its fullness.”

This workshop is open to all but a special invitation is extended to educators, parents, and high school and university students. There is no cost but please let us know if you are able to attend. This will help with the organization of the workshop. A light lunch will be provided.

Saturday, January 17, 2004. – Registration 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. Edmonton ProLife office.

Life Principles.... Challenging the cultural assumptions that underlie the tolerance of acts like abortion and euthanasia.



## Upcoming Events

- **Saturday, January 17, 2004. – Registration 8:30 a.m. – 9:00 am to 2:00 pm** – Life Principles Workshop - At the Edmonton ProLife Office. (See above for further information)
- **January 28, 2004 – 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.** – Join your fellow citizens in showing solidarity with the unborn as we mark the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Supreme Court decision to decriminalize abortion in Canada. We will meet in front of the Edmonton Law Court buildings. Signs available at 11:25.



For information on any of the above events, call the Edmonton ProLife office at 425-1637 or email us at [edmpl@interbaun.com](mailto:edmpl@interbaun.com)

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EPL Board: President: Paula Rebstock, Vice-President: Denise Fedoruk, Treasurer: Glen Woolger, Recording Secretary: Mary Zak, John Wallish, Denise Moutenay, Corrie Morcos

Office Manager: Karen Richert

New board members welcomed. Meetings first Tuesday of each month at EPL office. All EPL members welcome to attend.

***Healing the Culture: A Commonsense Philosophy of Happiness, Freedom, and the Life Issues***  
by Robert J. Spitzer, S.J. Ph.D. with Robin A. Bernhoft, M.D., Camille E. De Blasi, M.A.  
Reviewed by Eileen Rebstock

The right to life is so basic that society's support for abortion never fails to shock pro-lifers. It seems unbelievable that a person, after seeing photos of the child within the womb, could still believe abortion is acceptable.



The answer, according to Father Robert Spitzer, lies in the understanding of the human person. A person has traditionally been defined as “a being possessing an intrinsic guiding force (whether this be merely genetic, a soul, or both) toward fulfillment through unconditional, perfect and even infinite truth, goodness, love, beauty and being.” When that definition is discarded, and a person is defined by his or her appearances, actions, or capabilities, the human person is devalued.

Spitzer explains that the key to the pro-abortion mentality is the culture’s understanding of happiness. All people want to be happy. However, happiness is difficult to find. When faced with suffering, people’s reactions will depend on their view of real happiness.

Happiness has classically been divided into three levels. Level One happiness (laetus) is the happiness caused by gratification of our senses. We are happy when we eat an ice-cream cone. Level Two happiness (felix) is the happiness of ego-gratification. We are happy when other people love, respect, or obey us. Level Three happiness (beatitudo) is when we gain happiness through serving other people, and making a difference in the world around us. Level Four happiness (gaude) is the desire for perfection.

As Spitzer writes, “A person operating exclusively out of Level 2 desires will find it extraordinarily difficult to care about the intrinsic goodness and transcendental mystery of a person. They form their identity through comparisons which emphasize tangible characteristics while de-emphasizing intangible characteristics such as intrinsic goodness, lovability, and transcendent mystery. Hence, an essentially Level 2 perspective compels one to view “persons” in terms of exterior characteristics, talents, I.Q., potential for competitiveness, etc. People who possess less of these characteristics seem to be lesser *persons*. They seem to be less than fully human and fully alive.”

Fr. Robert Spitzer’s *Healing our Culture* presents a sound, philosophical framework that will help restore a life affirming view of personhood, needed for a culture of life.

## Morgentaler sues New Brunswick for funding

(With files from the *Interim*)



Acting on a threat he has made for years, Henry Morgentaler has launched a lawsuit which, if successful, will force the province of New Brunswick to pay for abortions at his Fredericton abortuary.

The suit has national implications according to Peter Ryan, executive director of New Brunswick Right to Life. "It could mean a new Charter 'right' to abortion on demand, as well as a Canada Health Act obligation on all provinces to fund them," explained Ryan, who is also president of Campaign Life Coalition New Brunswick.

Morgentaler accuses New Brunswick of contravening the Canada Health Act and "violating the spirit of the Morgentaler decision by the Supreme Court of Canada, which was rendered 15 years ago." He claims that decision gave women an unfettered right to abortion. According to *The New Freeman*, he anticipates spending up to \$1 million on the lawsuit.

"What goes on at Morgentaler clinics is abortion on demand," says Ryan. "That is an elective, rather than a medically necessary procedure. Currently, there is no Charter right to elective abortion. Further, the Canada Health Act does not require funding of any electives, including abortion on demand."

New Brunswick Right to Life will be applying to the court to intervene in the case. Other interested groups may join them or intervene separately. "In our application, we have to supply affidavits of all the witnesses we want to use; for example, women who have had abortions, experts who have studied post-abortion effects. There will then be a hearing to consider the submission (which Morgentaler can oppose, and the court can reject)," explains Ryan.

"Overall," he adds, "preparing for the hearing and participating in the trial will likely be a fairly lengthy process. I hope the pro-life movement across Canada will help us through prayer and financial aid."

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### Silent No More

*Canada Silent No More* is a national campaign of Post-Abortive women reaching other women who regret their abortions and have been hurt physically, emotionally or spiritually because of it. They want you to know that help is available and that you are not alone. *Canada Silent No More* is also collecting affidavits from women who have had abortions for the New Brunswick Morgentaler case. For more information please call 1-888-777-5503.

## Spreading the Pro-Life Message

In recent issues, we have identified pamphlets that help in explaining the pro-life message to your family and friends. In this issue, we're highlighting a few websites where you can find further information.

[www.edmontonprolife.org](http://www.edmontonprolife.org) - Edmonton Pro-life's website.

[www.albertaprolife.com](http://www.albertaprolife.com) - Alberta Pro-Life's website.

[www.lifesite.net](http://www.lifesite.net) - Campaign Life Coalition's news and information site. Daily headlines about life issues.

[www.abortionfacts.com](http://www.abortionfacts.com) This website has brought together quality information on the abortion debate from many different sources. This site is very well researched, and will have the answer to any question you might have about abortion and related issues.

<http://www.afterabortion.org/> - The web's most complete source of information on the after effects of abortion and post-abortion healing. We have over 500 hundred links to thousands of pages of original research, testimonies, articles, and resources. Most of these are drawn from articles and books published by the Elliot Institute, one of the nation's leading authorities on post-abortion issues/.

<http://www.webhart.net/vandee/prolife/history.shtml> - Timeline of legal and political decisions regarding abortion in Canada.

<http://www.abortionbreastcancer.com/> - Dr. Joel Brind's site on the link between abortion and breast cancer.

<http://www.togetherforlife.ca/> - Denise Mountenay, author of *Forgiven of Murder.. A True Story*. She has been on countless talk shows across Canada, spoken to many schools and organizations, and is a board member of Edmonton Pro-life.



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### Walk-a-Thon Results

Our Love Them Both Walk-a-Thon went ahead in September. Thank you to all participants and those who supported the walkers. Edmonton Pro-life was able to raise about \$18,000. Mark your calendar for next year's Walk-a-Thon. Same time. Same place. Saturday, September 18, 2004.

## **Life Issues Lexicon**

### **Conception, Fertilization, and Abortifacients**

Edmonton Prolife is often questioned as to why there seems to be increasing confusion as to when life begins and so this edition of *Life Issues Lexicon* will examine the terminology surrounding it.



**First what is conception?** Ever since its discovery 150 years ago, **conception** has referred to the union of the sperm and ovum to create a new human being. This is the definition that we use when we say that our goal is to protect human life from conception to natural death. However, in the 1960s the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the American College of OB & GYN agreed to attempt to redefine “conception” to mean **implantation**. Implantation takes place two weeks after the sperm and ovum unite. The **blastocyst** (scientific term for the embryo at this stage of development) travels down into the mother’s womb and attaches to the side of the womb where the baby will grow for the next eight and a half months.

**Why then is there confusion in definitions?** The answer is simple. In the 1960s, a number of new birth control methods came onto the market. They were not contraceptives; that is, they did not prevent fertilization and therefore the beginning of a new life. Instead, they killed the new life by not letting implantation occur. They were properly called **abortifacients** (Latin for ‘causes abortion’). Knowing that many people would morally object to using abortifacients, pro-abortion groups and pharmaceutical companies lobbied to change the definition of conception, so as to confuse the public as to what these drugs did.

**Why is all this medical jargon important?** When I began my first year at the University of Alberta, there was a Health Awareness session for all new students in which the **Morning after Pill** was being promoted. During Questions and Answers, one astute student got up and said, “Wait a second. Isn’t the Morning after Pill an abortifacient? Doesn’t it work *after* conception?” The presenter didn’t bat an eye. “Oh no,” she said, “The Morning after Pill works *before* conception.” The student sat down, rebuked and confused. What the presenter had done was used the *new definition of conception as the moment of implantation*.

**How can we get past these linguistic games?** When discussing this issue, keep your vocabulary precise. You can avoid this little trap by using the alternate term **fertilization** to refer to the union of sperm and ovum. It is a scientific fact that life begins at fertilization, not at implantation two weeks later.

**Which ‘contraceptive’ drugs are actually abortifacients?**

**The Combination Oral Contraceptive, or The Pill**, is one of the most common of ‘contraceptive’ methods. However, most people do not know how the Pill works. While it can work to prevent fertilization, the Pill also works as an abortifacient. A standard medical reference, *Danforth’s Obstetrics and Gynecology* states this: “The production of glycogen by the endometrial glands is diminished by the ingestion of oral contraceptives, **which impairs the survival of the blastocyst in the uterine cavity.**” *Translation into ordinary English:* the Pill also makes the mother’s womb inhospitable, so that if conception does occur, the new life can not survive.



**The Progestin-Only Pill or “The Mini-Pill”** contains only progestin. It also makes the womb uninhabitable, causing abortion.

**Norplant (I.U.D.)** as with all progestin-only methods, changes in the wombs lining which inhibit implantation are one of the ways that Norplant acts.

**Depo-Provera or “The Shot”** also contains progestin which is injected directly into the woman once every three months. Again, the lining of the womb is changed by the progestin.

**The Morning-After Pill** is administered after unprotected intercourse. It is really just a large dosage of combination oral birth control pills. It almost always works as an abortifacient.

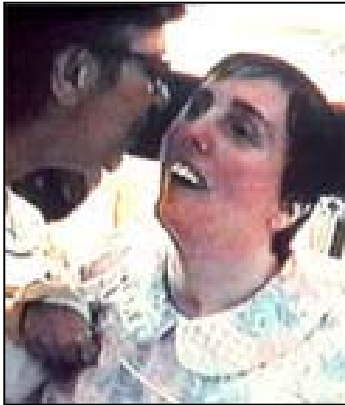
(With files from Massachusetts Citizens for Life)

**Edmonton Prolife provides this information so that men and women can make truly informed choices. If you would like more information on the above and or a particular method of birth control as to its possible action as an abortifacient please contact [www.electricmedia.net/cpc/](http://www.electricmedia.net/cpc/) Concerned Pharmacists for Conscience or [www.pfli.org](http://www.pfli.org) Pharmacists for Life International.**



## Terri Schiavo – Fighting for Life in Florida

Thirteen years ago, twenty-six year old Terri Schiavo, collapsed of causes unknown, leaving her profoundly cognitively disabled. Today, Terri receives her food and water by means of a feeding tube. She smiles, laughs and cries. She recognizes voices and responds. At times, she vocalizes sounds, trying in her best way to speak. Terri has not had any progressive rehabilitation or arousal therapy in more than 10 years.



Terri Schiavo responding to her mother

Months after her collapse, her husband Michael filed a medical-malpractice lawsuit, during which he promised to care for her for the rest of her life. The jury awarded him \$1.3 million to pay for Terri's care and rehabilitation.

However, since that award, Michael Schiavo has denied his wife the rehabilitation she needs. Instead he has crusaded for Terri

to be slowly starved to death. In a trial, initiated February 11, 2000 by Schiavo's husband, Judge Greer upheld Michael Schiavo's right as legal guardian, allowing him, and not her parents, to select the woman's doctors and the life-extending medical treatments that she is supposed to be receiving. In reality, this means that Michael Schiavo was given permission by the court to have his wife starved. On October 15, the feeding/hydration tube was removed. She was expected to die after 10-14 agonizing days.

Yet, Terri's parents, Bob and Mary Schindler, had not given up. With hardly any financial support, and no attention from the mainstream media, they had continued their fight for their daughter's life, bringing her case to the internet through [www.terrisfight.org](http://www.terrisfight.org). Video clips of Terri interacting with her parents gave her story a human face. Governor Jeb Bush's office received tens of thousands of emails, phone calls, and letters asking him to intervene to save Terri's life. Local Edmontonian disabled rights activist, Mark Pickup, and Edmonton Liberal MP, David Kilgore, brought Canadian attention to Terri's plight by asking for Canada to intervene on her behalf. (The federal government refused to do so.) Six days after the feeding tube had been removed, the Florida legislature passed *Terri's Bill*, suspending all dehydrations contested by families. Governor Bush immediately signed it into law and Terri's feeding tube was restored.

What will happen now? *Terri's Bill* is being challenged in the Florida courts. Terri still needs our support. To stand in solidarity with her and her family, go to [www.terrisfight.org](http://www.terrisfight.org) for more information, and to help with various action items.

## Euthanasia – A Personal Perspective by Mark Pickup



The onset of multiple sclerosis is sudden. I went dead from the waist down. I could not distinguish something hot from something cold. I could not distinguish blunt from sharp. Overnight, I lost the use of my right hand, and I am right handed. My wife had to help me dress. For a time, I could not hold a pencil, and when I came to the point where I could, I scribbled like a little kid. Within a week, I had gone from the world of the able-bodied to the world of the disabled. They are distinctly different worlds, rather like two solitudes.

From 1984 to 1987, I found myself on a relentless slide downhill. The pattern of attack and remission was so volatile that I would go to bed at night not knowing what I would wake up with or wake up without. My vision was affected for a while. I would lose the ability to speak, and I would froth like an imbecile. I would gain my speech back, lose it, gain it, lose it. I would go incontinent. I would lose sensation. I would lose short term memory and experience confusion. In fact, that is what drove me from my career in the end, I would go spastic. I would experience a crippling fatigue, and I still do.

Happily, most of these symptoms have abated. I use a cane around the house and my scooter for distances of more than half a block. During my bad times, I am confined to a chair – or worse, bed – and I know that there is a good chance that my destiny is to be bedridden, barring an effective treatment being developed for multiple sclerosis.

### Significant Community

Everyone needs to belong to a community in its truest and most complete sense. I prefer to use the phrase "significant community" by which I am referring to a network of people who provide nurture for each other, and create a living environment that is inviting for all its members, and where relationships are important, and interdependence is viewed as something to be cherished. I am very fortunate to have a significant community. My wife, my family and dear friends are part of that significant community. I am referring to a community of people who are committed to helping people search for life with dignity. People who encouraged me and helped me search for purpose and meaning again.

They were not afraid to help me understand that to be vulnerable encourages acceptance and freedom from fear. My significant community has benefited because they got a clear glimpse of their own humanity, and I think they like what they saw.

You see, part of the grieving process is helping people find the resources to invest in the next stage of their life, even if that next stage is its conclusion. This can, if we let it, change victims into victors. That is what a significant community is, and that is what a significant community does.

### Is our response to kill?

Perhaps you are thinking, "That is fine for him; he has a significant community. What about those who do not?" That is precisely the question. What about those who do not? Is it any wonder that they would choose death rather than live in a world without a significant community for them? Is our response to kill them in their desperation or is our response to find them the nurture of a significant community?

During my darkest days, if I had not belonged to a significant community, and all that entails, I am sure I would have wanted to die.

Where do we find this significant community? A significant community is us, you and me. A caring significant community has no place for euthanasia. It is committed to the promotion of good palliative care. A caring, significant community is committed to the idea of supporting people in their search for life with dignity.

### A civilized society

The title of "civilized society" is something that must be earned. If we want to be that kind of society, we must commit ourselves to interdependence and nurturing, not independence and separateness, which eventually translates into detachment and indifference.

A significant community is not just for the terminal, the chronically ill, the frail, or the vulnerable. We all need a caring, significant community to lift us up. Yes, sometimes the fastest way home is the longest road, but the destination is not the only goal. Growth of individuals, citizens and nations comes from the journey itself. Our laws and policies must be designed to bring out the best in our citizens and encourage nurturing, caring communities. Bringing out the best in our people is not accomplished by killing. Canada must commit itself to trying to ensure that all her citizens are attached in meaningful way to significant community. We must commit ourselves to interdependence, not independence.



We are not 30 million little islands each unto ourselves. Words like "citizen," "nation," "community" and "family" attest to our interdependence. If I opt for euthanasia or assisted suicide, it will not just affect me. It will affect my wife and my children, my mother and my siblings, and it will affect my physician, because she will have exchanged her role as healer for that of executioner. In a significant way, it will affect my nation by further entrenching the notion that there are lives that are not worthy to be lived.

### Euthanasia is hostility



We are a nation. We are a Canadian family. Let us stop all this talk of killing and recommit ourselves to each other, to life, to interdependence and all that entails. Canada stands at a crossroad about how we view human life. We must ask ourselves who we are. Is being a significant community too costly an investment for us? Do we value even the "useless?" If the answer is no, I need to know that because I am one of the "useless." I need to know my country's answer.

*Mark Pickup is the director of **Human Life Matters**, an Edmonton-based ministry for the disabled. You can check out his website at [www.humanlifematters.com](http://www.humanlifematters.com)*

*Reprinted from the Euthanasia Paper. (Available at the Edmonton Prolife Office)*

## Life Protecting Power of Attorney for Personal Care

The Life-Protecting Power of Attorney for Personal Care is a simple way to protect yourself if you become incapable of making medical care decisions for yourself.

The problem with most Power of Attorney for Personal Care documents is that they contain ambiguous language which may result in your premature death or costly legal challenges to medical care decisions. The Life-Protecting Power of Attorney for Personal Care is designed to safeguard you from these possible situations.

If laws forbidding euthanasia or assisted suicide in Canada are weakened, the Life-Protecting Power of Attorney for Personal Care will protect you from those who might question your right to live.

***To receive the Life-Protecting Power of Attorney for Personal Care, send a donation of \$20 with a note requesting the form to the Edmonton Prolife office.***

## Edmonton Prolife: Working With Others for Life

**Life Canada** - Edmonton Prolife is an Associate Member of Life Canada, the national Pro-Life educational group. The object of Life Canada is the establishment and operation of a national association of local and provincial educational pro-life groups across Canada. In co-ordination with local groups, they seek to foster and promote public understanding and knowledge of life issues. *Life Canada News* is published six times a year. To subscribe to *Life Canada News* or to read back issues, go to [www.lifecanada.org](http://www.lifecanada.org)

**Alberta Pro-Life** - Edmonton Prolife is affiliated with Alberta Pro-Life, the provincial pro-life umbrella group. A portion of your membership fee goes to support their work with local and national groups to effect change in our society. *The Rose* is published four times a year. To read *The Rose* online, go to [www.albertaprolife.com](http://www.albertaprolife.com)

### All I Want For Christmas Is...

Dear Santas (you know who you are),

On behalf of the board of Edmonton Prolife, I extend our thanks for all the help: financial, material, and otherwise, that we have received throughout 2003. Our office manager, Karen Richert has been working in our office since the summer and she has told me how wonderful it is to see the generosity of our membership. From her also, a big thank you.



Edmonton Prolife's work is ongoing and so are our needs. Any help that you can give is appreciated. All donations are tax deductible. Again, I put in a plug for AFT funding. AFT simply means Automatic Funds Transfer. It is a way to support Edmonton Prolife all year. Monthly giving is easy and (practically) painless. But for us, stable funding means a whole lot. Your annual membership fee will be covered by the monthly donations. If you have any questions on how you can set up your AFT, please, give Karen a call. Have a very merry Christmas and all the best in 2004,

Paula



Clip out and send to Edmonton Prolife, 212, 11125-107 Ave, Edmonton, AB T5H 0X9

*Yes, I would like to help Edmonton Prolife in their work in defence of life.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Membership Fee (\$20) \_\_\_\_\_

Donation \_\_\_\_\_

Total Payment Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Options

Cheque

Visa

MasterCard

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Cheques payable to *Edmonton Prolife*

#### Join now for easy monthly giving

Monthly giving is an easy way to spread your generosity out over the year and provide a stable base of funding for Edmonton Prolife programs. Your annual membership fee will be covered by the monthly donation.

I authorize Edmonton Prolife to withdraw \$\_\_\_\_\_ (minimum \$5) from my bank account on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of each month. My personal bank cheque marked VOID is enclosed.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Memberships and donations are tax deductible. Charitable Registration #118894047**



#### Our Aims and Objectives

To promote respect for all human life from conception to natural death.

To uphold and defend the right to life, the basic human right on which all other rights depend.

To contribute to the understanding of the people of Edmonton and the surrounding areas, by education, that society has a duty to protect this right.

We are committed to peaceful actions to fulfill our mission.

(2:1)