

In Defence of Life

Edmonton ProLife's Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 3

'educating for life'

May, June, July, 2003

Blessed are the Peacemakers

Paula Rebstock

President of Edmonton ProLife

On June 3rd, Edmonton ProLife will host its Annual General Meeting. We will review our past year and begin our new year. I will be staying on as president, finishing my two year term. If you have ever thought about coming onto the board, please give Liz, our nominations chairperson, a call at 434-5089. The time commitment is not excessive and yet the support of the board members means a lot to the executive.

The past year has seen several new initiatives to present the pro-life message to more people in the Greater Edmonton Area. One of them is this newsletter. With the printing of the third issue, I wish to express my thanks for all the positive comments and words of encouragement we have received. Through our newsletter, we have been able to highlight and review pro-life educational resources: books, pamphlets, videos.

We have also been able to provide pro-life news while linking readers to sites that feature up-to-date information on life issues. Starting in this issue, we have added a feature entitled *Life Issues Lexicon*. Basic vocabulary will be explained. To understand the issues does take a little basic vocabulary. It is amazing how often innocuous medical terms "are used to distract attention from the fact that what is involved is the right to life of an actual human person."

Complimentary copies of the newsletter are distributed throughout the Greater Edmonton Area. If you would like copies for your church or organization, give us a call.

This newsletter will reach many of you who are not yet members of Edmonton ProLife. Please consider becoming a member. A membership/support form is on the back page. I am looking forward to hearing from and meeting more of you. Read through the *Calendar of Upcoming Events* and see how and where you might participate.

Another exciting project is our new school education program. It focuses on human fetology: the development of the unborn child between conception and birth. The presentation will be done in the context of the incredible dignity of human life from conception to natural death. In June, I will present the program to two junior high classes. If you know of any class that would like a similar presentation, please give me a call. It can be modified to meet the needs of any group.

In the last few months, Canadians have spoken often and loudly about peace. In many ways, the work of the pro-lifer is the work of the peacemaker. We must look past the terrible disguise of "pro-choice" rhetoric and see the tragedy of persons hurt by abortion. We must understand the notion of human personhood, and what is meant by the intrinsic dignity of all persons. As pro-lifers we acknowledge the dignity of all persons including those who oppose or misunderstand the pro-life position.

Finally with Mother's and Father's Day around the corner, I would ask that pro-lifers continue the ongoing work of peacemakers at home, bringing life and understanding to our country. Especially I give tribute to all the mothers and fathers who faithfully work to love, nurture, and educate the children of this land. Their fidelity, in spite of real difficulties, is a sign of hope to a nation that has in many instances forgotten its children.

On behalf of Edmonton ProLife, I wish you a wonderful, relaxing summer with family and friends.



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Fundraiser For Life



Through the *Safeway Community Caring Coupons* program, every time you shop at Safeway, you can support Edmonton Prolife's educational work. Each booklet costs \$20.00 and consists of four \$5.00 coupons, plus two bonus coupons for 10x Air Miles and two \$1.00 coupons on any Safeway Select products. The \$5.00 coupons can be used any time you spend a minimum of \$50.00. Use is *not* restricted to any specific month but they must be used before the end of 2003. With the sale of each coupon booklet, Edmonton Prolife will earn \$8.00 - that means 40% from every booklet sold goes directly to our organization. This isn't meant to change your shopping habits, but if you do shop at Safeway, you can pass on some of your shopping money to pro-life work. If you would like to purchase one or more booklets, please give Ethna a call at the office at 425-1637 or Liz at 434-5089. We will mail you the booklet immediately. A cheque for \$20.00 per booklet should be made out to Edmonton Prolife. This is a way that you can get your friends and neighbours to help our cause. To date \$240 has been raised through the Safeway coupons program.

Upcoming Events

- **Saturday, May 10, 2003.** – Fundraiser: *A Salute to Motherhood!* – Coffee and Dessert and a Humorous Look at Motherhood – St. Agnes Church 10826-62 Ave. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Program begins at 7:00 p.m. Tickets \$12. Tax receipt will be issued for \$10. Phone Ethna at the office at 425-1637 for tickets.
- **Wednesday, May 14, 2003** – 34th anniversary of the passing of the Omnibus Bill, legalizing abortion in Canada. Show your solidarity with the unborn. Peaceful protest at the steps of the Alberta Legislature at 10:30 – 12:00. noon. Signs will be provided.
- **Tuesday, June 3, 2003** – NOTICE TO MEMBERS! Edmonton Prolife's Annual General Meeting 7:30 p.m. at the EPL office. All members are encouraged to attend. Consider coming on board our Board! Phone Ethna if you would like to stand for election.
- **July 17-26** – Edmonton Prolife's annual Klondike Days booth. Phone Ethna at the office to volunteer.
- **Saturday, September 20, 2003** – Love Them Both Walkathon 2003. Rundle Park. Mark your calendars!
- **November 6- 8, 2003** – National Pro-Life Conference, Edmonton – *Life 2003 Silent No More* – Keynote speaker: David Reardon – Elliot Institute (www.afterabortion.org)



For information on any of the above events, call the Edmonton Prolife office at 425-1637 or email us at edmpl@interbaun.com

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Editorial Committee: Paula Rebstock, Liz Stolee, Eileen Rebstock Layout: Eileen Rebstock

EPL Board: President: Paula Rebstock, Vice-President: Denise Fedoruk, Past President: Anne Wansink, Treasurer: Liz Stolee, Recording Secretary: Mary Zak, John Wallish, Glen Woolger, Marie Fehr

Office Manager: Ethna Scammell

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

Life Principles

A review of the Video Series

By Eileen Rebstock



What can we do to end abortion? It seems perfectly reasonable to think that if the general public was educated about what the unborn child looks like, if crisis pregnancy was supported and adoption promoted, if logical philosophical arguments were presented for the humanity of the child, abortion would end.

While all these endeavours are necessary, ignorance is not the ultimate problem. Most people know that the unborn are human! There's no trouble understanding this when a wanted child is happily expected by parents, family, and friends. When the child is unwanted, however, those involved will suppress that knowledge, or worse, go ahead with an abortion anyway. The question is why.

Many women have been given all the education they need to make the right choice. But they choose abortion anyway. The vast majority of abortion-minded women do not visit a crisis pregnancy centre, even though studies have shown they know of the support they could get from a centre, and actually approve of the centres' work! Again, why?

The *Life Principles Video Series* attempts to answer these questions, looking at the philosophy that underlies a person's choices for or against life.

The series begins by defining the human person 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."

In short, all human beings are made to seek happiness. The problem, though, is that human beings can have a very strange idea of what happiness is. This false understanding of happiness is what leads to the modern tragedy of abortion.

Camille De Blasi, the director of Life Principles, tells the story of "Larry" to illustrate this. "Larry had a decent job, fun friends, and considerable talent in his academic work. But Larry was addicted to drugs, spent every weekend drinking, and was notorious for pursuing one sexual exploit after another... imagine, if you will, the life-shattering whiplash a person like Larry would experience should an ex-girlfriend suddenly appear on his doorstep, announcing that she is pregnant and he is the father..."



"According to Larry, **Happiness** is the pleasure and possession of material objects. **Success** is the triumphant avoidance of pain and loss, and the acquisition of the greatest degree of material wealth and pleasurable stimuli available. **Self-worth** (or "**quality of life**") is judged by his ratio of pleasure to pain, acquisition to loss, and control to weakness/dependency..."

"Is it any wonder then that Larry's reaction to his ex-girlfriend's news would likely be to suggest an abortion? Offering Larry very good arguments about the **personhood** or **rights** of the unborn child, or about the good beyond himself (the **common good**) would likely not change his mind..."

"Considering how a baby will affect Larry's perceived happiness, success-rate, quality of life etc. are we surprised that he would view the child as a "problem" to which abortion is the "solution?" Is it any less surprising to learn that showing Larry pictures of his unborn child, or offering him free counseling and his girlfriend free medical care may not be enough to change his mind?"

The Life Principles program explains that Larry's trouble is his identity. De Blasi explains that according to this narrow self-centered view of happiness, "Abortion appears to be a good answer to human suffering. We cannot change the answer unless we change the viewpoint."

The *Life Principles Video Series* presents a uniquely rational and commonly accessible approach to explaining the underlying philosophy of the pro-life movement to a secular culture. It includes a facilitator's guidebook with a complete *Life Principles* video index, full colour graphics, study questions and notes on each unit, and a comprehensive optional Bible study. Several Edmonton groups have already begun the series, and their reviews have been very favourable. If you are interested in seeing the videos, or hosting or joining a *Life Principles* study group, please call the office at 425-1637.

NB: The authors of this program have also written the book *Healing the Culture*, which we will be reviewing in a future issue.

"*Healing the Culture* shows us how to escape the lethal cul-de-sac of "I did it my way" and get back onto the path of doing it the right way – which is the road to happiness and excellence." – George Weigel

Healing the Culture by Robert J. Spitzer, Robin A. Bernhoft, and Camille E. De Blasi is available at the EPL office.



Genetic Engineering: Christian Values and Catholic Teaching by Paul Flaman, Ph.D.

Reviewed by Rebecca Davis-Mathias, Ph.D.

Since Dolly, the first cloned sheep, swept into relentless media coverage in 1997, genetics has garnered increased scientific, political, socio-economic, and ethical deliberation. Paul Flaman, who teaches at St. Joseph's College on the University of Alberta campus, has written a handy, user-friendly genetics resource tool which addresses these various considerations. Flaman's work helps to develop a richer understanding of who we are as human beings and what our moral obligations are to each other and to all life in any form.

Flaman's approach is to create a dynamic dialogue in four chapters between Catholic teaching and genetic engineering science. He demonstrates this specifically through discussion in chapter one on plants as they relate to agribusiness, ecological concerns, biological warfare, GMOs, xenotransplants, transgenic animals and hybrids, cloning plants and animals, and patenting life forms.

In chapter two these discussions focus primarily on humans: genetic testing and screening in relation to prenatal diagnosis, fetal therapy, and abortion; preimplantation genetic diagnosis, genetic testing after birth, and genetic testing before marriage and conception. Central to these ethical issues are the short- and long-term considerations of proper genetic counseling, confidentiality and discrimination considerations. Genetic therapy, eugenics, and "designer babies" are highlighted as well as human cloning for reproductive and "therapeutic" purposes.



Obviously, ethical and theological implications resound throughout the book, but are developed most comprehensively in chapter three when the ambiguous question of "playing God" arises. Are we to control nature for our own purposes and agendas? Or are we to honor, protect and nurture the nature God gave us? If we should "play God", how may we responsibly uphold the intrinsic value of biological life? After informing us with facts, reasoning, and balanced perspectives on each of the above subjects, Flaman carefully poses penetrating discussion questions at the end of each chapter for further reflection.

The final chapter presents an effective way of working through the morality of genetic engineering dilemmas. By focusing on the inherent dignity of all human life, Catholic teaching offers considerations for Christian/Catholic reflection before choosing courses of action and response.

This book can be borrowed or purchased from the EPL office, or borrowed from the Edmonton Public Library.

Spreading the Pro-Life Message



In our last issue, we identified several pamphlets that help in explaining the pro-life message to your family and friends. We will continue to highlight more titles in this and following issues.

- **Forgotten Fathers** - This helpful brochure explains that men who do not hide their feelings often describe their abortion experience as bewildering and painful beyond their coping abilities. An excellent aid to help us understand and assist with this situation. (General)
- **The Pain That Follows** - This popular brochure takes a sensitive look at how women cope after an abortion. It explains grief and guilt, who is at risk and what can be done. (General)
- **Secret Sorrow** - This distinctly masculine brochure speaks directly to a man who is hurting from the loss of his child through abortion. It gently calls to mind the reality of what happened and encourages him to seek hope and healing through counseling, reconciliation and a church community. (Christian)
- **Hope and Healing: When Someone You Know Has Had an Abortion** - Someone you know has trusted you with the fact that they have had an abortion. How do you react? This valuable brochure will assist you in helping this woman deal with her pain, reclaim a sense of self worth, and trust in Christ's unconditional forgiveness. (Christian)

The pamphlets highlighted in the newsletter are only a small selection of the over thirty brochure titles Edmonton Prolife has available. Phone Ethna at the office (425-1637) and she will be happy to find you appropriate material that you will be able to pass on to your target audience.

Don't think you have to master the issues in incredible detail in order to speak out. Admit you don't know everything, but insist that what you do know is essential. The key point is that individual human life begins at conception, and each person has an intrinsic dignity worthy of protection.

Standing In Defence of Life



May 14th, 2003 marks the thirty-fourth anniversary of the legalization of abortion in Canada. In light of this anniversary, I reference these words of John Paul II to lawmakers and justices. I thank the many men and women in both professions who in the ensuing thirty-four years have worked and do work to re-establish the most fundamental rights of all Canadians without prejudice of age, or ability.

...at the level of politics and government: the original and inalienable right to life is questioned... The State is no longer the "common home" where all can live together on the basis of principles of fundamental equality, but is transformed into a tyrant State, which arrogates to itself the right to dispose of the life of the weakest and most defenceless members, from the unborn child to the elderly, in the name of a public interest which is really nothing but the interest of one part. "How is it still possible to speak of the dignity of every human person when the killing of the weakest and most innocent is permitted? In the name of what justice is the most unjust of discriminations practiced: some individuals are held to be deserving of defence and others are denied that dignity?" When this happens, the process leading to the breakdown of a genuinely human co-existence and the disintegration of the State itself has already begun.

To claim the right to abortion, infanticide and euthanasia, and to recognize that right in law, means to attribute to human freedom a perverse and evil significance: that of an absolute power over others and against others

John Paul II, Gospel of Life, #20

Please join Edmonton ProLife in marking the 34th anniversary of the Omnibus Bill legalizing abortion in Canada. On May 14th meet at the steps of the Alberta Legislature. Signs will be available 10:30 a.m to 12:00 noon. Bring a picnic lunch for afterwards. If you have never attended a pro-life demonstration before, make a resolution to attend this one. It might seem daunting, but it isn't. You'll be surrounded by friends. These demonstrations keep the pro-life debate alive.

What You Can Do: Circle the date on your calendar, invite a friend, and be there!

Bill C-13 Update (with files from lifesite.net)

The latest information on Canada's Assisted Human Reproduction Act, Bill C-13 is that the Rob Merrifield motion to send the bill back to committee was voted down. The motion, which would have allowed for revision of the fatally flawed bill within committee, failed with a lopsided vote of 60-170. Debate on Bill C-13 will be ongoing. For the latest information, check out <http://www.lifesite.net/features/stemcellembryo/index.html>



U.S. Senate Passes Ban On Partial Birth Abortion (with files from lifesite.net)

By a vote of 64-33, the U.S. Senate passed a bill to ban the practice of partial-birth abortion nationwide. The ban, twice vetoed by President Bill Clinton, is strongly supported by President George W. Bush. It now goes to the House of Representatives, which last year approved the ban by a nearly two-to-one margin.

President George W. Bush issued a statement yesterday praising the U.S. Senate for passing legislation to ban partial-birth abortion. The President said "partial-birth abortion is an abhorrent procedure that offends human dignity." The President's short remarks indicate that he sees the legislation only as an incremental measure in the work towards full pro-life legislation. "Today's action is an important step toward building a culture of life in America," he said.

"President Bush, 70 percent of the public, 64 senators, and four Supreme Court justices say there is no constitutional right to deliver most of a living baby and then puncture her head with scissors," said Douglas Johnson, legislative director for the National Right to Life Committee (NRLC). "But five Supreme Court justices said that partial-birth abortion is protected by Roe v. Wade, and 33 senators agreed. We hope that by the time this ban reaches the Supreme Court, at least five justices will be willing to reject such extremism in defense of abortion."

Euthanasia Prevention Coalition

From the president of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition: Barrie deVeber M.D. FRCP(C)

As a retired paediatric oncologist I have had the privilege to provide medical treatment and care for hundreds of children over a span of more than 30 years. Each of my patients was a unique individual who deserved the best possible treatment and was cared for with dignity and respect. As a physician, I always attempted to provide the best pain and symptom management (palliative care) for my patients.

I am thankful that euthanasia and assisted suicide were considered unethical practices during my many years as a physician. My relationship with my patients and their parents was one of trust and they trusted that I would always respect their human dignity. To truly care for a dying person is to ensure that someone is with them in their time of need, that their pain and symptoms are compassionately managed, that their life is treated as sacred until its end.

True compassion is caring, not killing.

The Euthanasia Prevention Coalition was established to prepare a well-informed broadly based, network of groups and individuals who support measures that will create an effective social barrier to euthanasia and assisted suicide.

Our Purpose

- To preserve and enforce legal prohibitions and ethical guidelines prohibiting “mercy killing.”
- To increase public awareness of hospice, palliative care.
- To promote improvement in the quality and availability of hospice/palliative care, and effective methods of controlling pain and suffering.
- To develop and build compassionate care community services as alternatives to “mercy killing.”
- To educate the public on the harm and risks associated with the promotion of euthanasia and assisted suicide through the use of pamphlets, information seminars, media campaigns and research articles.
- To co-ordinate and disseminate research and information on issues related to euthanasia, assisted suicide.
- To represent the vulnerable and where appropriate, advocate before the courts on issues related to euthanasia and assisted suicide.

The purpose of [the Euthanasia Paper] is to provide factual information concerning the issues of euthanasia and assisted suicide that can be distributed throughout Canada. We recognize that many people have not had the necessary information to make an adequately informed decision concerning the issues of Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide. We believe that Canadians have the right to know the facts.

Reprinted by permission from The Euthanasia Paper, a twelve-page newspaper designed to inform the general public about the issues of Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide in Canada. The Paper is available free of charge from the Edmonton ProLife office. Edmonton ProLife will continue to highlight the work the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition is doing across the country. For more information on End of Life issues, you can call their toll free number 1-877-439-3348 or visit their website: www.epcc.ca

Life Issues Lexicon – Euthanasia

The original Greek meaning of the term “euthanasia” is “easy or good death.” Over time, this meaning has been lost, so that today euthanasia can be defined as: *to deliberately act or fail to act with the intention of causing the death of a human being for the purpose of relieving suffering.*

The victim is usually, though not exclusively, chronically or terminally-ill, or disabled, not necessarily imminently dying. The person performing the act of euthanasia is usually, a health-care provider or family member. The participation of the medical profession in these acts has led to the use of the term *medicalized killing*. It is important to be clear as to which medically-based decisions at the end of life are not classified as euthanasia. To withdraw or withhold treatment from a terminally ill person when the risk or burden of that treatment is greater than its benefit is a legal and common practice. It is also consistent with thousands of years of belief and practice. (From the *Euthanasia Paper*)

Thank you to our sponsors!



www.edmontonprolife.org

Edmonton ProLife's website contains contact information, the EPL newsletters, membership forms, and links to pro-life and pro-family websites. The basic page also provides a catalogue of some of EPL's most important resources. These resources can be borrowed from the office, but, in addition, our website details whether they are available through the Edmonton Public Library and the University of Alberta libraries, as well as where they can be purchased. Eventually, this catalogue will cover all our resources.

Edmonton Prolife: Working With Others for Life

Life Canada - Edmonton Prolife has recently become 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.

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



Before Settling into Summer ...



A word of thanks to the many in the Greater Edmonton Area who continue to support the work of Edmonton Prolife, be it in cash, kind, or time. Our office will be working throughout the summer and we will need your continuing generosity. Before you head for the lake, beach, or simply the backyard, please consider my request for help. All donations will be gratefully received and tax receipted. Finally, our new board will be voted in on the 3rd of June at our Annual General Meeting. I am sure you will join me in expressing thanks to all who will join our board, working to amplify your voice in defence of life.

Thanks, Paula



Clip out and send to Edmonton Prolife, 212, 11125-107 Ave, Edmonton, AB T5H 0X9
(EPL staff waiting to hear from you)

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

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Cheques payable to **Edmonton Prolife**

Join now for easy monthly giving

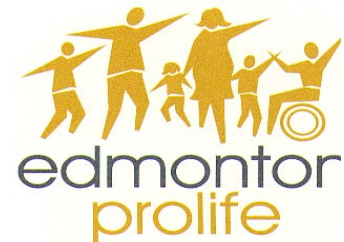
Monthly giving is an easy way to spread your generosity out over the year and provide a stable base of funding for Edmonton Prolife programs. Your annual membership fee will be covered by the monthly donation.

I authorize Edmonton Prolife to withdraw \$_____ (minimum \$5) from my bank account on the 5th 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.

(1:3)