

The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Grouard-McLennan Diocesan Council
Christian Family Life Communiqué #2014-1

March 1, 2014

To: All Parish Council Christian Family Life Standing Committee Chairs
From: Mary A., Grouard-McLennan Diocesan Christian Family Life Chairperson

Hello to my sisters in the League.

Sanctity of Life

The subject of Euthanasia is prominent in the news again. The vote on Bill 52 in Quebec is due to take place shortly. It was to take place on Thursday but the Opposition Liberals are asking for more debate on the issue, insisting its members want more time to speak. The legislature is due to break in March and this legislation could die on the order paper if not passed before the dissolution of the legislature (June 11, 2014).

Bill 52 (labelled "Dying with Dignity") would allow medically assisted death with a doctor administering medication to a terminally ill patient if they meet a host of requirements, including filling out a consent form and the approval of two doctors. (*The patients also need to be of legal age, of sound mind, in the "end of life" phase and physically and psychologically suffering.*) This is very similar to the legislation adopted in the Netherlands some years ago. Since that time the Dutch Government expanded the law to allow euthanizing children and is now discussing again expanding the law to include Alzheimer patients. (Wednesday, February 19, 2014 CTV interview with Margaret Sommerville, Professor of Ethics, McGill University – go to <www.ctvnews.ca> and search "Bill 52 Quebec" to view the complete interview.) I urge you to also check out the article "Bill 52 – The Euthanasia Bill submitted by Terri S. in the Winter 2014 edition of *The Canadian League* magazine. A few other sources of information on this issue are the Catholic Organization for Life and Family www.colf.ca and the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition www.epcc.ca .

Euthanasia is illegal in Canada and the current Federal Government has indicated it is not interested in addressing the issue but at their policy convention in Quebec this past week the Liberal Party of Canada adopted a resolution to support end-of-life assisted suicide. This is a critical time. Members are urged to contact their MP, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Justice Peter MacKay, as well as their opposition counterparts (all parties) to make them aware of our position. We must be vigilant!

Ministry to the Separated and Divorced

Pope Francis has said church law regarding marriage, divorce and separation is a topic that exemplifies a general need for mercy in the church today, and that it will be a subject of discussion at this October's extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the "pastoral challenges of the family in the context of evangelization."

He is asking priests to search for ways to minister to divorced and separated Catholics, "so that they do not feel excluded from the mercy of God, the fraternal love of other Christians and the church's solicitude for their salvation," and help such persons keep the "faith and raise their children in the fullness of the Christian experience."

In the *CWL Constitution & Bylaws* we are also called to minister to the separated and divorced. Our National Chairperson of Christian Family Life, Margaret Ann J., addresses how we can do this in her article "Divorce and Remarriage in the Catholic Church" – Page 5 in the Winter 2014 edition of *The Canadian League*.

Ministry to Seniors

A February 18, 2014 news article published in a Chicago publication reported that research conducted by John Cacioppo, psychology professor at the University of Chicago, carried out on a group of 20,000 people found that feeling extremely lonely can increase an older person's chances of premature death by 14 per cent, an impact nearly as strong as that of a disadvantaged socioeconomic status. The article went on to say that social isolation had twice the impact on the risk of death as obesity and had adverse health effects including sleep problems, high blood pressure, impaired immune cells and depression. As I read the article I was struck by the important role our councils carry out as we do our ministry in the community. Our members regularly offer help to those who require assistance to complete everyday tasks such as grocery shopping, banking, keeping doctor/medical appointments, etc. We always knew that our efforts were appreciated but this information certainly makes it clear how very necessary it is that we continue to do our work. It takes a special individual to help others in a way that makes them feel important and loved. Thank you for all you do!

Ministry to Youth

At the close of World Youth Day celebrations in Rio de Janeiro, Pope Francis announced a focus on the Beatitudes to furnish themes for the celebrations for the next three years. The theme for the 39th WYD (2014) will be "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5:3), the 2015 WYD theme will be "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (Mt. 5:8), and the 2016 WYD (which is to take place in Krakow, Poland) theme will be "Blessed are the Merciful, for they will receive mercy" (Mt. 5:7).

The Diocesan Youth Rally 2014 will take place April 11-13 at Glenmary School, Peace River, AB.

For further information contact the Archdiocese at:
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May God Bless You and Keep You as you continue your work for God & Canada,

Mary