



ORGANISME CATHOLIQUE POUR LA VIE ET LA FAMILLE  
CATHOLIC ORGANIZATION FOR LIFE AND FAMILY

## **Message of the Catholic Organization for Life and Family on the occasion of the National March for Life**

### **Recovering a sense of outrage and true compassion**

This year, the theme of the National March for Life confronts us with an inescapable scientific fact: “Abortion kills a human being.” How can we remain silent or indifferent?

Science established long ago that the development of a new living human being starts at the moment of his or her conception, when a sperm fertilizes an egg and a new genetic code is instantly formed. Nine months later, a human baby will be born. A unique and irreplaceable being who, if he or she had not been human from the moment of conception, never could become human.

In Canada, tens of thousands of “babies” are aborted each year, quite legally. A gap in the law makes this procedure possible at any moment in the pregnancy, for any reason.

#### **A wounded conscience**

At the beginning of March, a group called *Project for an Ontario Women’s Health Evidence-Based Report* (POWER) published some very worrisome statistics. In 2007, for every 100 babies born in the province of Ontario, 37 others were aborted. Among adolescents ages 15 to 19, 152 unborn babies were aborted for every 100 live births. In the hospitals, for 52% of women who came for an abortion, including one in five who were adolescents ages 15 to 19, this was at least their second abortion. These numbers do not include statistics for abortion clinics, which perform over half the abortions in Ontario and do not require parental consent to perform an abortion on an adolescent. There is no reason to believe that the situation is any different in the other provinces of Canada.

We pain at the thought of so many human lives being rejected and destroyed in a country that likes to think of itself as civilized. And at the thought of the silent – and forbidden – suffering of so many women and mothers of today and

tomorrow. We must pay attention to the brave women who, for a number of years, have shared their post-abortion suffering with the world if we are to understand the physical effects (sterility, cancer of the cervix, miscarriages, ectopic pregnancy, breast cancer, etc.) and the devastating emotional impact that voluntary abortion has on many women.

Those who suffer from post-abortion syndrome experience serious psychological issues that reveal, according to Pope Benedict XVI, “the irrepressible voice of the moral conscience and the most serious wound it suffers every time that human action betrays the innate vocation to the good of the human being.”<sup>1</sup> This voice, which is present in every human being, not only those who believe in God, allows us to discern good and evil in concrete daily situations. This is the voice of our Creator speaking to the heart and inviting each person to protect human life.

### **Inner healing**

In solidarity with women who have had an abortion, whose souls are often wounded and who seek inner healing, we do well to turn to the words of Blessed Pope John Paul II:

The Church is aware of the many factors which may have influenced your decision, and she does not doubt that in many cases it was a painful and even shattering decision. The wound in your heart may not yet have healed. Certainly what happened was and remains terribly wrong. But do not give in to discouragement and do not lose hope. Try rather to understand what happened and face it honestly. If you have not already done so, give yourselves over with humility and trust to repentance. The Father of mercies is ready to give you his forgiveness and his peace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. To the same Father and his mercy you can with sure hope entrust your child. With the friendly and expert help and advice of other people, and as a result of your own painful experience, you can be among the most eloquent defenders of everyone's right to life.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of what we may expect, surveys<sup>3</sup> have shown that a growing number of Canadians (between 60% and 66%) are in favour of some legal restrictions on abortion. Our Members of Parliament must take notice!

Also, despite the Canadian cultural context that continues to water down the moral seriousness of abortion and other attacks against human life, many people and organizations offer psychological and spiritual assistance to mothers and fathers who find themselves facing this moral and existential tragedy.

## **Abortion resolves nothing**

In inviting all of society to seek answers that better serve the good of women and, above all, that protect the right to life of the child who is conceived, Benedict XVI notes that “special fortitude is demanded of doctors so that they may continue to assert that abortion resolves nothing but kills the child, destroys the woman and blinds the conscience of the child’s father, all too often ruining family life.”<sup>4</sup>

In the face of so much suffering and destruction, the testimony of Stéphane Hessel, a hero of the French resistance against the Nazis during the Second World War, has something to teach us. In October 2010, this 93-year-old man published a small book entitled *Indignez-vous!* (Time for Outrage). In his text he speaks out against the growing gap between the very rich and the very poor, the state of the planet, the race for “more and more,” competitiveness, the tyranny of the financial markets, and so on. The book was an immediate and huge international success.

May his words reach us and help us to recover our sense of outrage towards the abortion tragedy that is playing out before our eyes day after day, year after year. Let us be filled with an outrage that results in concrete action on behalf of unborn children and their mothers, who are so often left with no support. To begin, let us walk together in the National March for Life. Make your way to Parliament Hill on May 12!

## **May 12, 2011**

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<sup>1</sup>Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to Participants in the General Assembly of the Pontifical Assembly for Life, February 26, 2011.

<sup>2</sup>Blessed John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 99.

<sup>3</sup> Environics Surveys for *Life Canada*, 2002 to 2009

<sup>4</sup> Benedict XVI, *ibid*.

*COLF is co-sponsored by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus.*