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London Area
Right to Life Association Inc.

Newsletter



A London Pro-Life Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2009

Volume 43 Number 3

Upcoming EVENTS

Please mark your calendars

Sept. 11-20 WESTERN FAIR (see pg. 5)

- New additional pro-life "Truth Booth"
- New location - now in the Canada Bldg.
- Contact Sherry 451-4537

Sept. ILDERTON FAIR

- Pro-life booth
- Contact Bonnie 666-2154

Oct. 4 LIFE CHAIN SUNDAY (see pg. 3)

- 2:30 - 3:30 (please arrive 15 min. prior to)

Oct. 19 - 22 FANSHAWE "SEXUAL AWARENESS WEEK"

- Contact Phil or Elaine 951-7789

Oct. 29

GUELPH YOUTH CONFERENCE "BEING A LIVING WITNESS TO LIFE"

- A Pro-Life 101 day-long course
- Guelph Bible Conference Grounds
- Cost: \$30 Time: 9:30 am to 2:30 pm
- Contact Jakki 519-824-7797

Oct. 29 - 31

NATIONAL PRO-LIFE CONFERENCE "Building Bridges - Making Choices for Life"

- Hilton Garden Inn, Saskatoon, Sask.
- **Speakers:** **Rod Bruinooge**, pro-life caucus
Ezra Levant, political activist
Dr. James Lamb, Lutherans for Life
Andrea Mrozak, ProWomanProLife
Dr. Larry Reynolds, expert in Family Medicine
John-Henry Westen, LifeSiteNews
Alex Schadenberg, Euthanasia Prevention Coalition
- Contact Saskatchewan Pro-life Assoc. at 306-683-0829 or buildingbridgesconference2009@gmail.com

MONTHLY HOSPITAL WITNESS

- Last Thursday (4 - 5:30 p.m.)
- LHSC (Wellington & Commissioners)
- Contact John 657-9009

Time Away for Reflection

President's Message By Phil Arnsby, President

On Sunday July 19 my wife, Elaine, and I took a week off and drove up to Midland, Ontario for a vacation. We had just returned from a pro-life "Show the Truth" tour and were looking forward to a week of just hanging out and relaxing. We had arranged to stay at a wonderful bed and breakfast called Little Lake Inn.

During our stay we took a boat cruise and explored the history of the area. Located just outside of Midland is the Martyrs Shrine. The present shrine was built in 1926 to honour the eight Canadian Martyrs and to carry on the spiritual work for which the Jesuit missionaries founded "Sainte Marie" among the Hurons in 1639.

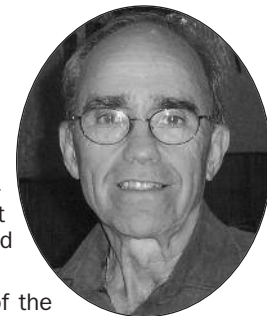
As we toured through the reconstructed settlement and the guides described the rough daily routines that the missionaries experienced, we marvelled at their dedication and lack of concern for material comforts. Amazingly, the missionaries knew before embarking on their mission that the dangers were substantial. The terrible suffering at the hands of the Iroquois and the Jesuits' love even for their captors is remarkable.

I pray that the Lord will fill all of us with that same missionary zeal and boldness to confront the culture of death in our society.

The Show the Truth Tour in July was in the Greater Hamilton area and was as rewarding as usual. We had 14 presentations of the truth about abortion over a five day period. The exposure was excellent and the police presence, which is always welcome, was good. (One police officer asked for several copies of our literature so she could give them to her fellow officers!) We had some newspaper coverage and lots of on-the-street discussions. As you know the graphic images we hold represent the reality of what is happening daily in our country.

Father Tony Van Hee was again with us this Tour. His presence and the daily Mass are gifts Elaine and I truly appreciate. Fr. Tony was also on the August Tour which took place from the 10th to the 14th in Pickering, Oshawa, Bowmanville, Whitby, Brooklin, Uxbridge, and Lindsay. Father Tom Lynch, head of Priests For Life Canada, joined us for a part of the Tour.

We ask for your prayers and particularly that the Lord will send more labourers into His vineyard. (See Margarida's office news.)



The young families did amazingly well.



Organizer Joe Bissonette & Family



Prayers & then setting up the lines



Sharing experiences at the end of the day



Taking a break between presentations (Three each day)



Motorists accept literature after seeing graphic photos

THREE RESPONSES TO THE GRAPHIC IMAGES

CHILDREN HAVE RIGHT NOT TO BE TRAUMATIZED *Letter by Beth Conly-Edwards, Brantford*

I believe in freedom of expression, but last week there was an anti-abortion protest with protesters holding extremely graphic and large poster of aborted foetuses.

The babies were bloody and mangled with limb and facial features torn away. The images were horrific. My children immediately began asking what these “terrible pictures” were depicting. It left me no choice but to try to explain. The questions are ongoing and my children continue to think about the images which they refer to as the “roasted babies.”

Today, days later, on seeing a mother robin with its baby, one of my children commented, “I’m glad that robins can’t do what we (humans) can do to our babies.” As astute as this comment was, I couldn’t help but think that my children lost some innocence about our world when they saw those protest signs. People have the right to protest, but remember our children should also have the right to drive down the street without being traumatized.

LARTLA Editor’s note: But there are over three million aborted little ones in Canada who will never have “the right to drive down the street.” Fr. Frank Pavone, founder of Priests for Life, explains that “the first priority is to stop the slaughter of the innocents and then console the living.” This mother has tended to her little ones admirably. “...what we (humans) can do to our babies” shows the wisdom she has received from her mother - not that she has been “traumatized.”

“OBJECTION TO GRAPHIC ABORTION PICTURES SHOWN IN PUBLIC”

Letter to the Editor by Londoner Vitto Norejko published in “The (Brantford) Expositor” on July 21

Perhaps the parents who are vehemently offended by the showing of graphic abortion pictures in public would like to learn something about the people behind the large placards that are held? I would like to offer that perspective, having been part of this group.

It was the first time that I travelled with the Show the Truth group for the full duration of its five-day mission during July 13 to 17 in Brantford and surrounding area. The people that I met and got to know are prayerful, caring individuals who, like I, would rather not show the terrible results of abortion in picture form to the public.

Nevertheless, circumstances in our nation warrant taking drastic action with what we believe is in accord with divine charity. This is akin to “tough love” that parents need to sometimes have for their children.

It may have been overlooked, but there were many children taking part in the demonstrations along side of their parents. How is that you say? Yes, the pictures do bother them, and that is why they want to help stop mothers from turning God’s precious gift of life into “bloody babies.”

These children are simply given an honest, age-appropriate explanation of the sad reality in Canada whereby a mother can choose, and is allowed to kill, her own child in the womb.

This is something that irate parents might try with their own children; possibly in conjunction with directing their children to shield their eyes. I suspect their children’s reaction might surprise them; and they may, as a result, grow to be part of the solution rather than contribute to the problem of abortion. Isn’t this much better than projecting onto one’s own children the anger and disgust a parent may have for the protesters holding the placards?

Let’s get on board parents: choose life! If you have children, how can you not cherish them enough to recognise that the killing of children in the wombs of their mothers must stop?

A child who sees the horrific result of an abortion, can be spoken to in a simple, loving way to understand the tragic situation in Canada and consoled if need be (are the parents willing to assure their children that they don’t condone abortion?).

In contrast, an aborted child is dead: beyond our capacity to reach out in love to comfort them. It is estimated that, since 1969, there have been over three million dead “bloody babies.”

Incidentally, as a Show the Truth demonstrator, I have often received as many positive responses as negative ones; moreover, this includes parents waving their hands in support of our objective all the while with their children sitting in the rear seat of the vehicle.

However, regardless of the popularity or lack thereof, our witness to the slaughter of our children must continue alongside all the other pro-life strategies until this scourge of our country is halted and life in all its stages is once more held as sacred.

MEDIA NEEDS to REMAIN OBJECTIVE on ABORTION ISSUE

Letter to the editor by Father Luc Payette St. Mary’s Parish, Brantford

I congratulate the pro-life volunteers who dare to “Show the Truth.” I have seen these enormous placards and am greatly bothered by them and force myself to look at them to face reality. I even have a photo of a dismembered baby on my desk so that I may never cease to pray and talk about the holocaust of abortion which has and is still denying the right to life to tens of millions of innocent human beings.

Imagine if the horror of the concentration camps had never been filmed, would the world have believed in such human cruelty? Imagine if natural disasters and human conflicts were no longer reported by the media; international help, soup kitchens and peacekeeping would virtually cease.

We need an objective role for the media so that serious human issues, like abortion, are never forgotten but brought to the forefront of social consciousness. Abortion remains a matter of death; life is the real choice.





LIFE CHAIN



A peaceful, prayerful witness to the truth



"will you not spend one hour with me?"

Sunday, October 4, 2009

2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

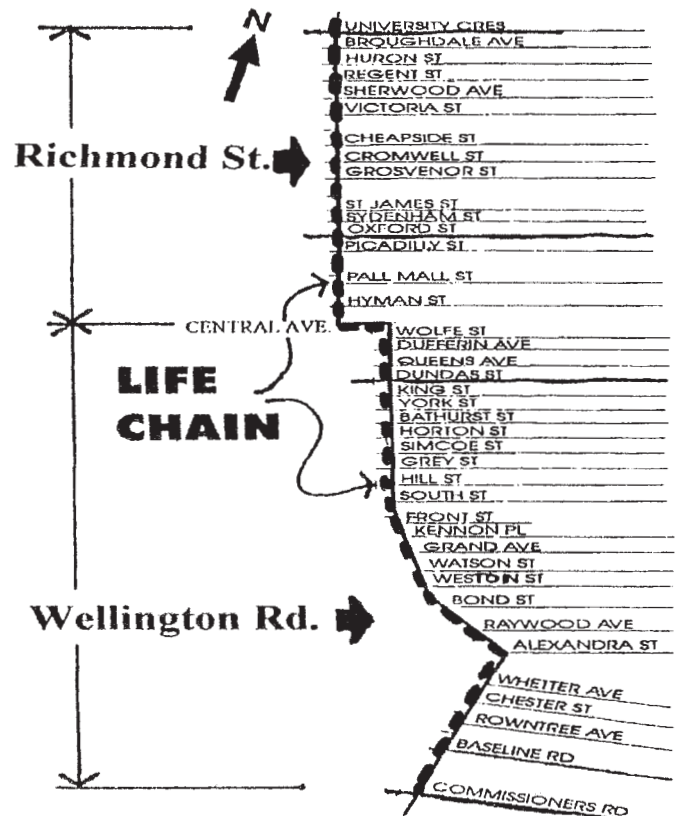
Please arrive by 2:15 p.m.



YOUR LOCATION:

(see church bulletin board)

stand or bring a chair and sit with your church



London Area Right to Life Association 519-659-3334

SEPTEMBER 2009



From the Office - A Life May Be Saved

by Margarida Andre

Recently, an abortion-minded woman, around 14 weeks pregnant, came into our office requesting information on scheduling an abortion. She told me she has other children and felt she cannot handle another one. I informed her that we are a pro-life organization and, as such, we would try to help her choose life and could not supply her with any information that would jeopardize her baby's life and possibly harm her.

I was expecting her to walk right out of the office, but she stayed! As I silently prayed, I quietly asked a few questions and took the opportunity to give her some pamphlets on fetal development, abortion health risks, adoption information, as

well as on Birthright and London Crisis Pregnancy Centre. I asked her to read the pamphlets and sleep on it that night and to let me know the outcome. She accepted the information, promised to sleep on it and even asked for my e-mail address!

I pray God touches her heart. **Please pray for the safety of both mom and baby. At this time, I haven't received any other information... but the seed has been planted.**

I am encouraged that although this woman was abortion-minded, she came to us for help - **further proof that we need to keep our doors open; we never know who will walk through them. But we continue to need your help. There are volunteer positions available on Tuesday and Friday afternoons.** For more information please call me at the office.

We are now looking forward to the Western Fair. This is our biggest community event of the year. Please come and check out our new "Truth Booth" display in the Canada Building.

As I end this report, I would like to say **thanks for your continued support of LIFE!**

A HUMBLE PLEA, ENDING THE ABORTION HOLOCAUST by Randall A. Terry

"The moral gravity of procured abortion is apparent in all its truth if we recognize that we are dealing with murder..." - John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae, 58

The Seductive Words of Death

The battle of rhetoric in the war on children was framed by the child-killers themselves, in order to promote the slaughter of unborn children. Former leaders in the child-killing movement, who by the grace of God have converted to life and to Christ, have brought to light the efforts of child-killers to ingrain an entirely new lexicon to hide the horrid truth.

One such courageous convert is Dr. Bernard Nathanson, now a baptized Catholic. Dr. Nathanson ran the largest killing center in the world in the late 60's and was a founding member of NARAL (The National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws). He and others have told of the efforts to introduce the jargon of "pro-choice" and "safe and legal abortion" and "fetus" and "products of conception." They spoke about "a woman and her doctor," and of course, the very word itself: "abortion".

What does "abortion" even mean? Historically, someone "aborted" the take-off of a rocket; soldiers "aborted" a mission; generals "aborted" a battle plan. One does not "abort" a human being. Humans are slaughtered, slain, executed, destroyed, exterminated, and killed. The child-killers never, ever, talk about babies, children, death, dying, or killing. They deny them all.

That Dreaded Word ... Murder

And the one word that they dread more than Dracula dreads a crucifix is the word used by John Paul II - murder. They hate the word "murder" because it resonates so deeply with the human heart. No amount of rhetorical anesthetizing can undo its force.

Remember: *Truth has within it the seeds of its own victory; lies have within them the seeds of their own destruction.* The more we use the searing, uncompromising words of Truth, the more impact we will have, the more we will unveil the heinous nature of this crime, and the more readily we will be able to contend with the merchants of death.

Can We Proclaim Truth with Lies?

We must not fall into the trap they have laid for us. We must not use their rhetoric, their jargon, their words, their lexicon of phrases and expect to win this war. If we surrender our weapons of Truth, how can we expect to wake up our people, mobilize our faithful, convert the confused, and rightly defend the lives of those about to be snuffed out?

Shadows of the Dead

Likewise, the pictures of slaughtered pre-born children bear



Randall Terry with John Paul II

irrefutable testimony to the words of Truth. An image of a murdered pre-born baby confirms the Truth of the words that abortion is murder, the deliberate destruction of a judicially Innocent human life in the time of peace.

To those who claim these images are "counter productive," I ask: Is it our duty to eliminate all pictures of all victims from every grave injustice that has ever cursed the earth? Are we to hide all evidence of the blood spilt by tyrants since the invention of the camera? Do we close the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.? Do we tear from the pages of our textbooks the images of the whip-

scarred backs of black slaves prior to the abolition of slavery? Do we lock up the video footage of the twin towers being attacked on 9/11/2001?

Those Bloody Icons

More importantly, stop and ponder this: the central icon of the entire Christian faith is a crucifix - an innocent man murdered on a cross! Some of those icons that grace our churches are quite graphic; some depict His precious blood streaming from His gaping wounds. Are we to believe that these haunting and gruesome images - which for centuries have inspired men and women to acts of dedication and sacrifice - should meet the same fate that the timid in the pro-life movement propose for the bloody images of aborted children? Forbid it, Almighty God!

The Nature of Truth

Those opposed to using pictures of the victims of this holocaust do not understand the nature of Truth.

The Truth is jolting, shocking, unsettling. And this is exactly what we need in our war to end child-killing. *If the populace is not deeply unsettled, we will never change the current status quo and make child-killing illegal again.*

Let us be bold in our duty to **proclaim** the Truth and unflinching in our duty to **show the Truth.**

Let us not fear the condemnation of the culture of death, nor the complaints of the timid in our midst that quake and crumble in the presence of hostility. Let us be prophets of life, and create an *urgency* equal to the crime of murder.

And only then will we prevail in the war against children, and drive child-killing back to hell from whence it came.

Join Us at the Western Fair September 11th to 20th

Volunteers call Sherry Doiron (519) 451-4537



WALKATHON 2009 RAISES \$13,000

On Saturday, June 6, the London Area Right to Life held its annual Walkathon.

We thank coordinator, **Sherry Doiron**, for again doing an excellent job. This pro-life witness is our main fundraising event and we raised approximately \$13,000 with approximately 100 walkers armed with pro-life balloons and water bottles,

We are grateful for the following people:

- Bishop R. Fabbro and Fr. J. Morawski and Fr. B. Klooster for morning mass.
- Rev. Lynne Williams for leading an interdenominational prayer service.
- Latisha Lang, honorary ribbon cutter, who began the 5 km Walk.
- The walkers who collected pledges and those who allowed us to walk for them.
- Jake Levesque for entertaining the walkers at the gathering after the Walk.
- Ted Schmidt and his crew for doing a great job, as usual, with the BBQ.
- Coordinators Marian Obeda and, in training, Janice Rutledge (registration),
- Debbie Normand (check points) and Margarida Andre (crossing guards).
- Donors: Spectrum Communications and Kelloggs Canada Ltd.
- A special thanks to the pastors who allowed us to take pledges at their Churches (Mary Immaculate and Holy Family).

Although the amount raised this year was down substantially from the last few years, we are particularly pleased and thankful that, even in tough economic times, many were prepared to sacrifice for the little ones. Bless you all.



Walkers about to start the 5km Walk.



After the walk, a time of fellowship and nourishment.



Donations at Mary Immaculate were brisk before & after masses.



Musician Jake Levesque entertained after the walk. (Latisha Lang at Mike)



Ted Schmidt (front) and Helpers, relax after most of the walkers have been fed.

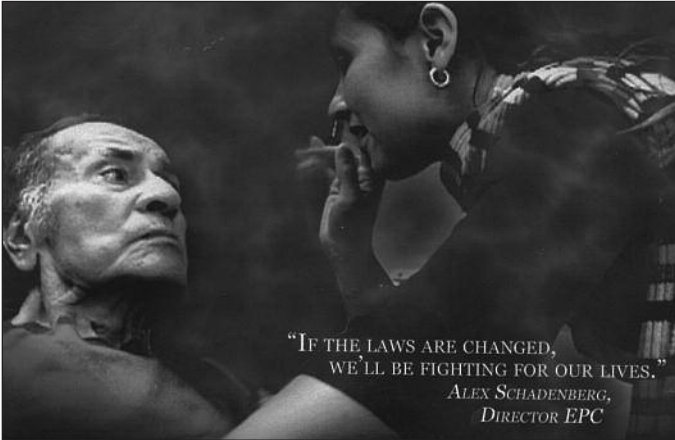


Trudy Ferwerda, 86 years young, walked the 5 Kms with the aid of her walker. AMAZING!

Doctors Should Kill the Pain, Not the Patient

Euthanasia Debate Should Not Be Confused with the Need for Pain-Relief Management

By Margaret Somerville in the "Ottawa Citizen"



Euthanasia is back in the news with the Quebec College of Physicians "tentatively proposing" legalized euthanasia. The college says that it could be seen "as part of appropriate care in certain particular circumstances."

An Ottawa Citizen editorial interprets this to say: "Terminally ill patients sometimes require increased dosages of painkillers to alleviate their pain although that can prove fatal. It certainly happens across the country that terminally ill patients are sometimes quietly given more painkillers despite the risk that they could die as a result."

Many people would conclude that is the most humane course of action." We can all endorse the last sentence: People in pain have a right to fully adequate pain-relief treatment. But that does not entail endorsing euthanasia, as pro-euthanasia advocates propose.

The pro-euthanasia lobby has deliberately confused pain-relief treatment and euthanasia to promote their cause. Their argument is that necessary pain-relief treatment that could shorten life is

euthanasia ; we are already giving such treatment and the vast majority of Canadians agree we should do so; therefore, we are practising euthanasia with the approval of Canadians so we should come out of the medical closet and legalize euthanasia. Indeed, they argue, doing so is just a small incremental step along a path we have already taken.

It's true and welcome that the vast majority of Canadians agree we should give fully adequate pain relief, but the pro-euthanasia lobby is wrong on all its other claims.

We need to distinguish treatment that is necessary to relieve pain, even if it could shorten life (which is a very rare occurrence if pain relief is competently prescribed), and the use of pain-relief treatment as covert euthanasia. The former is not euthanasia, the latter is.

The distinction hinges on the physician's primary intention in giving the treatment. Pain-relief treatment given with a primary intention to relieve pain and reasonably necessary to achieve that outcome is not euthanasia, even if it does shorten the patient's life. Any intervention, including the use of pain-relief drugs, carried out with a primary intention of causing the patient's death and resulting in that outcome, is euthanasia.

Acting with a primary intention to kill is a world apart from acting with a primary intention to relieve pain. And this is not a novel or exceptional approach. The law recognizes such distinctions daily. If we accidentally hit and kill a pedestrian with our car, it is not murder. If we deliberately run him down with our car intending to kill him, it is.

It is a tragedy for patients, especially those who are terminally ill and in pain, and a major disservice to physicians, nurses and humane and good medical care to confuse these situations as the college seems to do. Physicians and patients become frightened of giving and accepting adequate pain relief.

Physicians should not fear that giving adequate pain-relief treatment is unethical or illegal; in fact, they should fear the ethical and legal consequences of not doing so. It is now generally accepted in the palliative-care literature and practice that it is a breach of human rights to unreasonably leave a person in pain; that doing so is medical negligence (malpractice); and, I believe, in extreme cases, it should be treated as criminal negligence - wanton or reckless disregard for human life or safety. It is torture by wilful omission.

Even most people who support legalizing euthanasia believe its use needs to be justified, usually as being necessary to relieve pain and suffering. Surveys of the general public that ask the question "Do you believe people in terrible pain should have access to euthanasia?" reflect that belief. But again this approach causes confusion between pain relief and euthanasia. It makes euthanasia the treatment for pain, and it makes it impossible for people to agree that all necessary pain relief must be provided, without also endorsing euthanasia. Respondents have either to agree to both pain relief and euthanasia or to reject both. Of course, to have the public endorse euthanasia might be the goal of some of these surveys.

Rights to pain-relief treatment will, however, be nothing more than empty words unless that treatment is accessible. If, as I do, we believe legalizing euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide would be a terrible mistake for society, we have serious obligations to ensure fully adequate pain-relief treatment is readily available to all Canadians who need it.

As to why legalizing euthanasia would be a terrible mistake, ask yourself the questions, "How would I not like my great-great-grandchildren to die?" and "What values do I want to pass on to the world of the future?" For some tentative answers, have a look at the 30-year history of legalized euthanasia in the Netherlands.

Margaret Somerville is director of the Centre for Medicine, Ethics and Law at McGill University, and author of many books including Death Talk: The Case Against Euthanasia and Physician Assisted Suicide



Toronto Archbishop Will Only Allow DEVELOPMENT & PEACE Funds To Go To Groups Approved by Local Bishops

John-Henry Westen, July 23, 2009

In a two-page statement issued today, Toronto Archbishop Thomas Collins has released his long-awaited decision regarding funding of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (D&P). For 2009, says the statement, "We will set aside \$1,125,000, which will be available for projects of Development and Peace which are operated by organizations endorsed by local bishops." The measure will serve to clear up the problems with such funding since none of the pro-abortion groups funded by D&P are known to be endorsed by their local bishops in the developing world.

After LifeSiteNews.com broke the story regarding evidence of D&P funding pro-abortion groups throughout Latin America, Asia and Africa, Archbishop Collins was the first bishop in the country to announce he was withholding its funding from ShareLife for 2009. Be assured I will not allow any money raised in the Archdiocese of Toronto to be used for pro-abortion activities or organizations," he said at the time.

In the current statement, Archbishop Collins also calls for a "thorough review" of D&P. "(I)n this coming year there needs to

be a comprehensive review of the organization, including its mandate, its governance and organizational structure, its policies and protocols related to the funding of projects, and the instruments of communication linking Development and Peace and the Canadian bishops."

The significance of the decision is heightened by the fact that the Archdiocese of Toronto, the largest in Canada, provides over one million of the annual ten million dollars D&P receives from dioceses. Given the numerous groups funded by D&P which are not approved by local bishops, the Toronto Archdiocese funds may not be used up. In such a case, the statement notes that the Archdiocese will re-allocate the portion left over.

While the leadership of D&P have accused LifeSiteNews.com of malicious attack, and even selfish motives in exposing the matter, the Toronto archbishop notes that the controversy has raised "legitimate questions." He adds: "Even acrimonious controversy can be fruitful if, always acknowledging the good intentions of others, we make use of it to bring about improvement."

In conclusion, Archbishop Collins indicates that future funding for D&P will be contingent on reform of the organization. "It is vital that this coming year be one in which Development and Peace experiences profound renewal, and the depth of that renewal will determine its future," he said. "Future ShareLife funding for Development and Peace will depend upon our assessment of the degree to which the issues that concern us have been resolved."

To read Archbishop Collin's original two-page statement go to lifesitenews.com July 23 in the archives and click on "two-page statement" (in blue) or go to: www.sharelife.org/documents/dpstatementjuly2309.pdf

MOTHER CHOOSES LIFE OF CHILD OVER CANCER TREATMENT

Catholic News Agency, Denver, Colo., Jul 24, 2009

Though Mayra Sandoval died of cancer on July 8, her son Samuel is alive and healthy thanks to her insistence on choosing life, against the advice of doctors who urged her to abort. Now, Mayra's husband and friends remember her as a powerful witness to the immeasurable value of life.

In an interview with "El Pueblo Catolico," the Spanish newspaper of the Archdiocese of Denver, Mayra's husband, Ricardo Flores, recalled the battle of faith and trust that the couple underwent in the months leading up to her death.

Both Ricardo and Mayra were born in Mexico. They moved to the U.S., where they met three years ago, began to date, and eventually moved in together. At the time, neither had a strong faith, but they were nevertheless overjoyed when, in October, 2008 Mayra became pregnant.

Months later, doctors detected a cancerous tumour in Mayra's lungs that was already in an advanced stage and was still continuing to grow. Mayra was advised to abort the baby on the spot, so that she could start a treatment to halt the cancer growth.

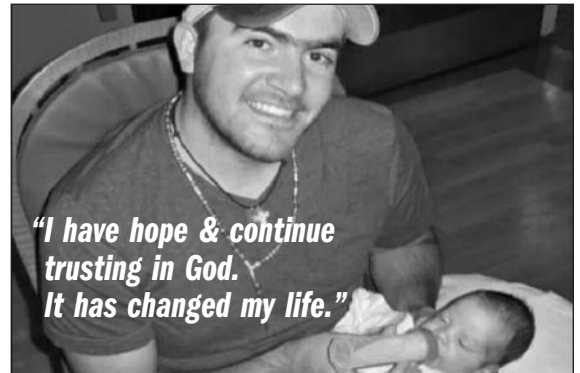
But Ricardo and Mayra chose life. Although it was difficult, Ricardo said he never had any second thoughts in the decision to choose life. When the option of abortion was presented, "We always said 'no.' We couldn't do that," he explained. "God gave life and God takes it away.

"And we can trust in God and let His will be done," he continued, explaining the peace that the couple found in abandoning themselves to the Lord's will. "We can accept whatever God sends us, good or bad."

While Mayra's cancer continued to take its toll, the couple was beginning to learn more about their faith. Mayra's sister, Aida, recalled the couple's spiritual



Mayra Sandoval on her wedding day.



"I have hope & continue trusting in God. It has changed my life."

journey. She described how God had not always played a prominent role in her sister's life. The road was difficult, but Ricardo and Mayra were not alone. They received prayerful support and solidarity from the Catholic community, including prayer groups from St. Anthony of Padua and St. Joseph's parish.

Particularly memorable for Ricardo was the loving presence of Fr. John Gregory, who helped the couple through their struggle. "He was always close to us," he said, "teaching us, helping us, supporting us, strengthening us, speaking to us about God, of all that God had done for us."

The sickness brought many trials, but also moments of light and hope. One time, the couple passed by St. Joseph's Church as they were on their way to the hospital. Mayra was experiencing sharp pains and having difficulty breathing, but she asked to stop at the Church.

They stayed at the Church praying for about two hours, first alone and then with members of a prayer group who arrived and offered to pray with them. Mayra's pain soon disappeared.

Again they realized that they weren't alone."

Six and a half months into the pregnancy, Mayra began chemotherapy. About six weeks later, however, doctors determined that the treatments were not working, and they had to perform an immediate caesarean section.

The operation involved a high risk of death for both Mayra and her son. It was an intense day of prayers and trust, Father John Gregory explained, and it affected even the hospital workers. "The nurses said, 'This is the first time we have seen something so strong, the blending of life and death.'"

Mayra survived the C-section, and Samuel was born, healthy for a premature baby. After a few weeks, the family was able to go home, but Mayra's condition continued to decline, until she had to return to the hospital, where the pain could be controlled. Despite radiation therapy, the cancer overtook Mayra's body and eventually, she was unable to eat or even breathe on her own.

On June 21, while she was in the hospital, Mayra and Ricardo were married. As they had grown in their faith and received guidance from Fr. John Gregory, they had come to see the meaning of marriage.

"We got married in a room in the hospital. It was beautiful," Ricardo said. "Afterwards, we felt peaceful, in God's grace. We also did it for Samuel, so that he could also receive God's blessing of having his parents married."

As her condition grew worse, Mayra's family prepared for the end of her earthly life. Aida described the beauty that shone through the pain of her sister's last days on earth. "At the end, I saw her like Christ, with so many wounds and bruises on her arms and her side," she said.

Those who knew Mayra will remember her beautiful witness to life. Fr. John Gregory described the opportunity to accompany Mayra along this difficult journey as "an incredible path of faith" for his own life.

"This experience has given me more strength to preach what death really is, because she gave me a witness of a new birth," he said. "It has given me more enthusiasm and helped me to understand that I have to explain that the true death is sin, not physical death."

Ricardo said that Mayra's sickness and death taught him about the existence and love of God. "Through all this, God made me know that He exists, that He is with us," he said.

Ricardo wants to give back to the Catholic community that has and continues to support him. But for now, his primary focus is his new son, whom he wants to raise and educate in God's love. "Now I have to look after Samuel, and tell him that his mommy gave her life for him," he said.

Although coping with Mayra's death is still difficult, Ricardo finds strength in the Lord as he moves forward. "Now I'm at peace," he said. "I have hope and continue trusting in God. It has changed my life."




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