

# ST. CATHARINES RIGHT TO LIFE NEWSLETTER



April 2016

## Bill C-14: Better Than No Law?

A year ago Canada's Supreme Court threw out Canada's law against assisted suicide for consenting adults suffering from a grievous medical condition that causes them enduring suffering without any remedy satisfactory to them. The Court has given Parliament until June 6 of this year to enact safeguards that might minimize the mistakes and abuses likely when assisted suicide is permitted.

Parliament is now debating C-14, the bill the Government proposes to govern assisted suicide. C-14 is much better than the recommendations of the Joint Committee that had been asked to advise the Government. C-14 does not allow assisted suicide when the illness is exclusively mental. Nor does it allow Advance Directives. C-14 insists that the death of the person requesting assisted suicide be "reasonably foreseeable." In its preamble, C-14 affirms the "inherent and equal value of every person's life," the importance of "robust safeguards reflecting the irrevocable nature of ending a life," and the need to protect vulnerable persons "from being induced, in moments of weakness, to end their lives."

C-14 requires written consent given in the presence of two independent witnesses, the agreement of a second doctor or nurse practitioner that the person requesting assisted suicide meets the law's eligibility requirements, and a 15-day period for reflection between the written request and the assisted suicide. It also includes a mandatory monitoring system. On the other hand, the Bill allows anyone 18 years or older to sign for the one requiring assisted suicide if that person is unable to do so. And if both medical practitioners agree that death or incapacity is imminent they can agree to shorten the 15-day waiting period.

*Bill C-14 does what is simply wrong: it permits assisted suicide.* C-14 accepts the ruling of our Supreme Court, but there was never much chance that the Government would break with the Court, especially when public opinion seems to mistakenly favour assisted suicide, or what the Court and Government prefer to call "medical assistance in dying." The safeguards in C-14 are inadequate. Too little is done to make sure the vulnerable are not being pushed towards suicide and that their consent is clear. Bill C-14 does not uphold the Charter-based

*(Continued on page 4)*



President of St. Catharines Right to Life William Mathie, Kitchener-Conestoga MP Harold Albrecht and Chair of the St. Catharines RTL Speakers Bureau Jon Brouwer at the March 31 Pro-Life Coffeehouse held at the Knights of Columbus Hall downtown St. Catharines.

Guest speaker MP Albrecht explained the dangers of the Parliamentary Committee recommendations on assisted suicide and what could be done about it.

Inside this Issue	Page
Bill C-14 Better than No Law?	1
May 26 Pro-Life Coffee House	1
President's Message	2
A Big Thank you To Our Business Sponsors	2
Niagara College Students For Life	2
Annual General Meeting	3
Respect For Life Mass	3
God's Perfect Timing	3
Protection of Pregnant Women and Preborn Children	4
January 25 Pro-Life Coffee House	4

Join us at our next  
**Pro-Life Coffeehouse  
and Dessert Social**  
**"See the Beauty in Every Life"**  
with guest speaker Amy deKorte  
*(see details inside)*

## President's Message



First, I thank all of you with this newsletter in your hands. I thank you for your support and prayers and the generous donations that enable us to keep up the fight for life. I also thank the pastors of so many of our churches for arranging for all in their congregations to get the newsletter. In this edition you will find an account of the Annual General Meeting in February, of the first and second “Coffee Houses” in January and March, and of the Respect Life Mass in April. You will read of our preparations for the annual bus trip to the

March for Life in Ottawa on May 12<sup>th</sup> and for a third Coffee House later in May. Our billboards and bus shelter ads continue to carry our message, and we continue to speak out whenever and wherever we can. Finally, I want to thank everyone responsible for the three wonderful concerts by the *A Wake to Praise Choir* at Vineland Free Reformed Church on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Just as we had begun to fear that our funds were falling a little short of our needs, we learned that the Choir had decided to donate whatever exceeded their costs to our Association. And, of course, we thank the Lord, for the grace that leads so many to support us.

Second, I urge you to continue in your efforts to make our MPs and others aware of our concern that the legislation on assisted suicide now before Parliament needs to protect the vulnerable. As one of our greatest authorities on palliative care recently wrote, “The dying are too ill to speak, and the dead will never complain. We, the living, must give voice to their needs, remembering our turn will come soon enough.”

*William Mathie*



*Niagara College Students for Life Rachel Slingerland and Rosalyn DeHaan offer pro-life information to their peers at an information display. A new pro-life club was ratified at the Welland Campus of Niagara College early this year.*

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**St. Catharines Right to Life is a registered non-profit organization providing educational material on abortion and euthanasia, and promoting respect for human life from conception to natural death. We support only peaceful means to promote our aims.**

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### A Big Thank You to our Business Supporters and Sponsors of our AGM Dinner

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## Annual General Meeting

If St. Catharines Right to Life supporters took home one message from this year's annual dinner February 27 at the Holiday Inn in St. Catharines, it emanated from the keynote speaker's expressions of hope. "It's not over yet. Don't be discouraged," Brad Mattes, President of International Right to Life, told the large gathering. He pointed to the slavery issue, which took 78 years before the battle was won. "We too need to work with the same determination that led to victory for the civil rights movement."

Mattes noted that support for abortion has declined as post-abortive women have shared their stories about the harmful consequences of abortion, and as the public has become aware of the callous treatment of women and their babies by abortionists like Kermit Gosnell in his "house of horrors." In the past year videos showing leaders of the abortion industry smiling over lunch while they boast of the sale of baby body parts salvaged from aborted babies has led to the defunding of Planned Parenthood in many states.

This year's AGM event also featured stunning artwork from Laura Restrepo, the moving song, *A Story Untold*, performed by Jim and Nicole Heida, an update from Niagara College Students for Life leader Jules Brouwer and a report from St. Catharines Right to Life Association President Greg Slingerland.

Slingerland reinforced the critical importance of what the Association accomplishes: producing over twenty pro-life billboards in Niagara and many transit ads, distributing thousands of copies of our newsletter to members and in local churches, organizing speaker workshops, and sending our own trained speakers into area schools. He also talked about the importance of the Association's participation each May in the Ottawa March for Life. He recalled how his own heart was touched when, as a Grade 10 student in 1999, he stepped off the bus from St. Catharines to join a crowd of thousands of "people from every age and background," to hear from women who had had abortions, to learn how abortions were performed, and to realize that Canada was without a single law restricting abortion.

Slingerland thanked all present for their support "through prayer, time and giving" that has saved lives, penetrated the darkness that surrounds abortion, and brought "hope and light to this community."

*Joan Webb and William Mathie*



## Respect For Life Mass

"Be not Afraid." These words that the Angel Gabriel addressed to Mary at the Annunciation were the text for Bishop Gerard Bergie's homily at the Annual Respect Life Mass celebrated at the Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria on April 4.

Bishop Bergie spoke of the role fear plays in tempting young women facing an unexpected pregnancy to consider abortion and those suffering serious illness to consider assisted suicide. He encouraged those fighting against the Culture of Death to find hope in the risen Christ. He urged the congregation "to be Christ" in supporting girls considering abortion and comforting the vulnerable and dying.

## God's Perfect Timing

Recently I was representing St. Catharines Right to Life, one of about a dozen charities, at the "Doorways to the Community" church service at Mountainview Christian Reformed Church in Grimsby. After the service, a young Christian Asian woman named Nyamaa approached our information table and told me that she was from Mongolia. She was in Canada for a short time, working as a translator. She was drawn to our table because in 2008, she had met a woman who had 5 abortions. This so moved her that she prayed to God, asking what she could do to be a voice for the unborn and their mothers.

In the years following, Nyamaa enrolled in nurse's training and upon completion, approached area schools to

*(Continued on page 4)*

**(God's Perfect Timing** *Continued from page 3*)  
offer prenatal information and teaching. But so far, not one had accepted her offer.

She told me that she felt called to start a crisis pregnancy centre, or pro-life center, in Mongolia and asked me for help. This was a request unlike anything I'd come across before and I didn't really know what to suggest, but I knew that she would need other like-minded people to work with for such an undertaking.

The next day, I contacted Brad Mattes, President of International Right to Life, who had been our guest speaker at the St. Catharines Right to Life Annual Dinner February 27. Having had the opportunity to chat with him several times during his two-day visit to St. Catharines, I knew that he had worldwide contacts, and if anyone could help Nyamaa, it would be Brad.

He responded to my email almost right away, assuring me that he had forwarded my email to someone who specializes in these centers around the globe. And then, three hours later, he emailed again to say that Heartbeat International, an organization that develops pregnancy centers where abortion clinics are the only alternative for abortion-vulnerable women, just 'happened' to get their first affiliate pregnancy center from Mongolia and would get in touch with Nyamaa. Needless to say, I was awestruck. As Brad stated, it was another example of "God's perfect timing!"

*Marlene Tersigni*



*Guest Speaker Anastasia Pearse of National Campus Life Network, Amanda Hendriks, Jules Brouwer, Sabrina Colella, Alexandra Evgenievna, Charmain Tulloch and Clarissa Canaria (centre) at the first St. Catharines Right to Life Pro-Life Coffeehouse held January 25 at The Heritage Cafe in St. Catharines.*

## Protection of Pregnant Women and their Preborn Children Act

A bill that would protect pregnant women and their unborn children from assaults will be debated and voted on in the House of Commons. In February, pro-life MP Cathay Wagantall tabled Bill C-225, known as *Cassie and Molly's Law* in honour of a pregnant woman and her pre-born daughter who were brutally murdered in 2014. The perpetrator will not be charged with baby Molly's murder because she was not born yet. In current federal law, a pre-born child is not recognized as a victim with respect to violent crimes.

Jeff Durham, Cassie's husband and pro-choice father of baby Molly, criticized abortion rights activist Joyce Arthur for opposing the bill, challenging her claim to be "pro-choice" as simply "not logical or balanced" because she ultimately advances abortion as the only protected choice. "You are not an advocate for a woman's choice if you are only willing to protect one of her options. In fact, you have been a cancer to the rights of these women, and it has come at a cost to their physical protection at the very time they should have it most. Please for the sake of women – get it right or step down," said Durham.



**(Bill C-14** *Continued from page 1*)  
conscience rights of physicians and nurse-practitioners.

Parliament and its Justice Committee (that includes local MPs Chris Bittle and Rob Nicholson) are now debating C-14. We can still press for amendments to improve C-14, especially for a provision that would protect medical practitioners against penalties for refusing to do what their conscience forbids. But it is important that C-14, improved if possible, be approved before June 6. **Without a law, one doctor's opinion will suffice, neither written requests nor a waiting period will be required, and there will be no monitoring of requests for assisted suicide.** We've had 30 years without a law on abortion. We cannot risk the same with assisted suicide.

*William Mathie*