



Catholic Civil Rights League

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Monthly highlights

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League urges support for Bill C-304

With Parliament resuming this month, this would be a good time to contact your MP in support of Bill C-304 if you have not already done so. This bill would remove Section 13 from the Canadian Human Rights Code. Section 13 allows the federal Human Rights Commission to penalize the peaceful expression of opinion, including that based on religious belief. See our press release and articles at www.ccrl.ca for more information. The bill could come up for second reading and voting very soon. Contact information for all MPs can be found at the parliamentary website: www.parl.gc.ca.

League would support effort to update legal definition of personhood

Canada's Criminal Code provisions surrounding the legal rights of the unborn child are confusing and not in step with medical and social realities. Therefore the Catholic Civil Rights League supports recent statements by MPs, including Stephen Woodworth and Jeff Watson, recommending that the provisions be discussed in Parliament.

"While most people acknowledge that human life is present from conception onward, legal personhood is a different story; it is denied until complete, live birth has occurred," notes Joanne McGarry, League executive director. "Medical science has seen numerous advances in pre-natal treatments for the fetus, so we believe many Canadians would like to see laws affecting personhood updated to reflect today's realities."

As MP Stephen Woodworth stated in a December 21 media release, Section 223 (1) of the Code "defines a human being as a child who has completely proceeded in a living state from the mother's body, whether or not the child has breathed. This means that in Can-

ada a child is legally considered to be sub-human while his or her little toe remains in the birth canal, even if he or she is breathing." Mr. Woodworth added that this law is based on 400-year old jurisprudence that has never been updated.

Section 223(2) also speaks to this issue, stating that a homicide occurs when a person deliberately injures a child before or during its birth and the child dies after exiting the birth canal. If the child dies before birth as a result of the same act, no charges are possible under this Section.

These laws do not reflect modern medical realities, and Parliament is the best setting to discuss whether they reflect today's understanding of human rights and personhood. The League would support appropriate legislation to update the provisions.

Poll shows better palliative care is needed, says League

The League commented January 3 on results of a Forum Research Poll finding that 67 per cent of Canadians surveyed said they support making it legal for doctors to help the terminally ill kill themselves.

The poll, taken December 13 when a high profile assisted death court case was in the news, surveyed 1,160 adults across Canada using accepted professional polling techniques. The question was "Are you in favour of making physician-assisted suicide legal in Canada for the terminally ill." Support was very high in Quebec (81 per cent) and ranged from 60 to 65 per cent in other parts of Canada.

"The result is fairly consistent with what other polls have found in the past, and really speaks more to the need for improved palliative and other end-of-life

care,” said Joanne McGarry, League executive director. “For most of us, it’s not that we want help in committing suicide so much as that we don’t want a painful or protracted end. This is the issue that we spoke to in our respect-life submission to the parliamentary committee on this topic, and the committee’s recent [research and report](#) report put a strong emphasis on it.”

People who support assisted suicide usually do so in a qualified way, and often express concerns about it being abused to the point where vulnerable people such as the elderly and disabled could be killed against their will. Most polls, such as that conducted last fall by Life Canada, find that these concerns are significant even if support for euthanasia or assisted suicide is expressed.

Media Watch: The Devil Inside panned

NEW YORK, NY January 16, 2012 (Review by U.S. National Catholic News Service) - "The Devil Inside" (Paramount), so we're told, is a film the Vatican doesn't want you to see. If so, perhaps there's a "Da Vinci Code"-like conspiracy afoot intended to save you 12 of your hard-earned, economic-downturn dollars. Those foolhardy enough to insist on wading through this cheap, inept piece of storytelling will experience an eye-poppingly bad, grotesque little horror outing. And that's not to mention the consistent spewing forth of lazy, sullen antagonism toward the Catholic Church.

The uninformed bias on display, in fact, can be compared not only to the turgid fantasies of Dan Brown but to the loopy visions of anti-Catholic cartoonist and tract churner Jack Chick. Thus one character declares, "In the eyes of the church, what we're doing is wrong; that's how we know it's so right!"

Keen to learn what provoked her mother Maria (Suzan Crowley) to murder two priests and a nun during an exorcism 20 years earlier, plucky documentary maker Isabella Rossi (Fernanda Andrade) jets off to Rome in search of answers, accompanied by her faithful cameraman Mike (Ionut Grama)

While this could be the premise for a faith-friendly (and genuinely terrifying) offering, instead director William Brent Bell, who co-wrote the screenplay with Matthew Peterman, opts to place a mix of poor theology, bizarre conspiracy theories and downright nastiness into the mouths of two rogue priests who ally with the duo of filmmakers in their quest for "truth."

The film's opening proudly proclaims that the Vatican

didn't assist in its production. That's all-too obvious, given the numerous inaccurate portrayals of both doctrine and practice. These range from made-up rites of exorcism to a blatant misrepresentation of the theology of baptism.

The film contains anti-Catholic animus, a fallacious presentation of church teaching and practice, implied acceptance of abortion, rare but intensely gory violence, a few uses of profanity and frequent rough and occasional crude language. The Catholic News Service classification is O -- morally offensive. The Ontario Film Review Board rating is 14A, cautioning coarse language, disturbing content and graphic violence.

Let the League know: If you see articles, notices of TV programs or other media content that you believe have serious anti-Catholic content, please contact us at crl@crl.ca to help us evaluate and respond in a timely way.

Chapter contacts

For upcoming meetings of our *Windsor-Essex chapter* contact Bob Baksi at robert@baksi.com.

Antigonish chapter: Contact Greg MacDougall, chapter president danielgregmacdougall@hotmail.com, for details. From September to June the chapter meets the first Tuesday of each month.

St. Catharines Chapter: Contact Justin O'Donnell at justinodonnell@cogeco.ca

The League is pleased to address parish and school groups in regions where we have a director available. Contact Joanne at 416-466-8244 for more information.

Mark your calendars: League annual dinner takes place Thursday June 7 in Toronto. Guest speaker Robert Ventresca, professor of history at Kings University College, London, Ontario, is Canada's leading authority on Pope Pius XII's wartime efforts to limit harm to Jews and other persecuted groups. Ticket information will be mailed in April.

Supporting the League

We rely completely on your generous support to continue our work. Gifts can be made online (www.crl.ca/join/donate) or by mail to CCRL, 500-120 Eglinton Ave. E., Toronto ON M4P 1E2.