

## Joanne McGarry, Requiescat in pace



We continue to mourn the passing of Joanne McGarry on April 27, 2014, Divine Mercy Sunday, after a nearly two year battle with pancreatic cancer. The date of her death was on the very day of the canonizations of Saints John XXIII and John Paul II. Although we provided email notices to our members, and despite several reports in the Catholic Register, it is possible that this may be the first notice for some of you of Joanne's death. We are truly saddened by our loss, and extend

our deepest sympathies to Joanne's husband, David, and their children, Laura, Sarah, and Daniel.

CCRL president Phil Horgan appointed Joanne to her role as the Executive Director of the League in 2004, where she coordinated our national office, and managed the League's public outreach, communications, development, and government and media relations. Joanne obtained her journalism degree from the University of Western Ontario, and served as the Managing Editor of the Catholic Register from 1980 to 1986. Thereafter, Joanne had served in various roles in the private sector, including managing her own public relations business. The League will truly miss Joanne's frequent communications and devoted service, of which these quarterly reports were a part. "The League was fortunate to have Joanne working competently and capably in a position which requires patience, maturity, and I dare say, grace. Joanne combined many gifts in service to the League", noted Horgan.

The Mass of Christian burial was held on Thursday, May 1, at 10:00 am at Our Lady of Perpetual Help parish in Toronto. Please know that Philip Horgan, Christian Elia, Bill French, other board members past and present, as well as Janine Langan (widow of Tom), and many friends and acquaintances participated in the wake and funeral arrangements in Toronto.

"It was a wonderful celebration, she would have been so excited about the whole thing," said Jim Hughes, president of Campaign Life Coalition as quoted in the Catholic Register. "She will be receiving her eternal reward. I don't mean to second guess the good Lord but I would say that something good is in store for her."

Many of us were indeed caught off guard as Joanne had just issued a press release and sent an email to all League members just three days prior to her passing. Her husband of almost 30 years David explained to the Catholic Register, "Joanne carried the fight on for 23 months after diagnosis... Generally pancreatic cancer, which is a real lethal one, takes one within six months. So we were happy for almost two more years together...Our shared belief in the Resurrection is helping me through."



**Requiem aeternam dona ei, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat ei.  
 Requiescat in pace. Amen.**

## CCRL Dinner featuring Guest Speaker Brian Lilley



On May 22, the CCRL hosted its annual dinner in Toronto. This year the keynote speaker was Catholic husband and father, host of Sun News Network's Byline, Brian Lilley. He urged all of us in our everyday lives to "normalize being Catholic." He cited a moment in his life when he witnessed an evangelical Christian co-worker in the cafeteria respectfully ask a couple

of colleagues to stop saying harsh comments against Christians in their conversation, explaining that he contested what they were saying and that he found it offensive. Lilley was impressed with this Christian's faith and his courage to stand up for it by politely, yet boldly standing his ground. Lilley stressed that as devout Catholics we ought to not shy away from speaking about matters of faith openly and intelligently in shared public venues when appropriate. "I'm not talking about telling the guy at the bus stop that he should go to confession (but) if you care about something why hold it inside," he said. "You don't have to beat people over the head with it; you just have to talk about it normally."

## CCRL presents Archbishop Adam Exner Award to Gwen Landolt



On May 22 at the CCRL annual dinner, the League presented the Archbishop Adam Exner Award for Catholic Excellence in Public Life to Gwen Landolt, long time national Vice-President of REAL Women of Canada. Gwen has had a long career in prolife advocacy, and the promotion of the family in national and international circles.

In her typical modesty, Gwen was very appreciative of the League's honour, and indicated that this was the first time that she had received such recognition for her many years of devoted service. Gwen stated, "It is a great honour to receive this award from the Catholic Civil Rights League. It is a great privilege that God gave me to this work. It is not so much me; I do think it is the blessings of God that gave me courage."

The League instituted the award to honour Archbishop Exner upon his retirement in 2004. It recognizes outstanding leadership in a variety of areas, including education, philanthropy, life issues and social development. Previous winners have included the late Frederick W. Hill, Catholic philanthropist and chairman of the Hill Group of Companies, Jim Hughes, founder of Campaign Life Coalition, Fraser Field, founder of Catholic Educators Resource Centre, Dr. Andrew and Joan Simone, founders of Canadian Food for Children, Frank Chauvin, founder of Haiti's first orphanage for girls, broadcaster Michael Coren, artist and author Michael O'Brien and prolife writer and activist Father Alphonse De Valk, CSB.

# Christian D. Elia, PhD appointed Executive Director of the League

With the permission of the Catholic Register, we reprint the article written by Evan Boudreau, published on July 11, 2014:

**TORONTO - The Catholic Civil Rights League of Canada has chosen Christian Elia as its new executive director.**



## Our New Executive Director

*Christian D. Elia, PhD*

The Catholic Civil Rights League (CCRL) is devoted to combating anti-Catholic defamation and to bringing Church teaching to bear on issues of public debate. On June 30, Christian assumed the role of Executive Director after having served on the Board since 2011. He has extensive experience in Catholic leadership.

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Elia will take over the role that has been vacant since Joanne McGarry died in April.

“I wish that it wasn’t under such unfortunate circumstances (but) I endeavour to carry on the good work that she has done,” said Elia, a professor at Niagara University’s College of Education. “We are talking about a continuation; we are not talking about a revolution. I have always been very interested in faith in the public sphere or faith in the public square; that is what I bring to the Catholic Civil Rights League.”

The League is a lay organization that combats anti-Catholic defamation and brings Church teaching to bear on public debate.

Elia officially took over the office on June 30 and quickly realized how big the shoes are that were left behind by McGarry.

“I have no problem telling you the truth and the truth is that it is overwhelming right now,” he said. “It is a big surprise the constant number of e-mails and phone calls that come in.”

League president Philip Horgan has full confidence in the new Executive Director.

“We are so pleased that Christian Elia has agreed to take on this most important role,” said Horgan. “The position of Executive Director of the Catholic Civil Rights League requires a facility with media and communications, knowledge of the faith, and a passion for seeking a fair hearing of the teachings of the faith in the public square. As a member of our board for the past few years Christian has already been engaged in much of this important work.”

And while Elia said he wants to keep things moving as they were under McGarry, one priority will be expanding social media. By utilizing this form of communication Elia hopes to tap into the demographic he worked with while serving as director of the Office of Catholic Youth for the Archdiocese of Toronto.

“Although I wish to start slowly because I want to do it properly, I really want to take advantage of social media,” he said. “Not just because it is simply the future, it is the present where we are. I want to engage a lot of the younger people, the people that I have met and people I would have known or the type of young adults I dealt with regularly when I was involved in youth and young adult ministry.”

This will allow the Catholic Civil Rights League to draw on “those who are on fire for their faith,” as Elia put it, but it will also help break down the general misconceptions about Catholicism.

“The biggest mistake is the concept ... that there is such a thing as faith being a private belief,” he said. “It is incorrect, it is wrong, and it is not genuine if you say that you are Catholic privately and then all of a sudden you put on a different cloak when you enter a building. You are not contributing to a pluralist society by doing that, you are actually making it difficult for people to see what forms your decisions because you are acting more as a chameleon than a person with genuine integrity.”

But before tackling this head on, Elia wants to broaden his network of contacts.

“I am very cognizant of the fact that we are a national organization. I want to nurture the relationships that we have with our members. So I’ll be relying on our regional directors in every province.”

## We’ve moved!

We’ve moved! Please note our change of address. The CCRL’s new mailing address is 2305 Bloor Street West, Toronto, Ontario, M6S 1P1. Our phone number is still (416) 466-8244 and our fax number is still (416) 466-0091. We are pleased to have introduced a nationwide toll free number: 1-844-722-CCRL (2275). As always, we can be reached at [ccrl@ccrl.ca](mailto:ccrl@ccrl.ca) and I can be personally reached at [celia@ccrl.ca](mailto:celia@ccrl.ca). Our website, Facebook, and YouTube accounts will all be updated shortly and we can be followed on Twitter at @CCRLtweets.

## Faith in the Public Square symposium



From August 5-7, CCRL President Phil Horgan and Executive Director Christian Elia attended a symposium co-hosted by St. Augustine’s Seminary and the Archdiocese of Toronto, “Faith in the Public Square”. Presenters included Cardinal Collins, Archbishop Charles Chaput, Professors Douglas Farrow, Iain Benson, Randy Boyagoda, Fathers Tom Rosica and Tom Lynch, and Dale Ahlquist. Both Phil and Christian participated by sitting on three different discussion panels, discussing issues such as freedom of conscience and religion in the public square, and variants of notions of pluralism.

# The CCRL has recently intervened in the following:

## CCRL Submission to the CPSO

On August 1, the CCRL filed a submission to the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) regarding their review of their Physicians and the Human Rights Code policy of 2008. We strongly advocated for the protection of the Charter right of freedom of conscience and religion for all Canadians including physicians in the daily routine of their care provision to patients and in the overall forming of their individual medical practices. Our written submission included the following:

The CCRL would like to underline that issues pertaining to the sanctity of life from conception until natural death is a core Catholic belief. To the devout Catholic physician, this would impact the providing of prescriptions of birth control pills and abortifacients and the performing of an abortion or its procural unless the mother's life is in imminent threat. We assure the CPSO that under no circumstances would any of the aforementioned practices be considered 'trivial or insubstantial'.

## Loyola High School

We were a joint intervener in the Loyola appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, argued on March 24, 2014. A decision is pending on this case involving the imposition of the Quebec Ethics and Religious Culture (ERC) curriculum on a private Catholic school, to the exclusion of its Catholic ethos.

The CCRL, along with our co-interveners, the Association des Parents Catholiques du Quebec, the Faith and Freedom Alliance and the Association de la Communauté Copte Orthodoxe du Grand Montreal argue that Loyola, an established Catholic school is entitled to the protection of section 2(a) of the Charter, the heart of which is the right to manifest one's religion "in community with others."

The ERC's requirement that Jesuit teachers at Loyola must put aside their beliefs, that is authentic Catholic scriptural and magisterial teaching, in favour of a mandatory secular view is a coercive act which infringes upon Charter rights of freedom of religion and conscience.

The absurdity that it is reasonable and acceptable to suspend one's beliefs even for the duration of a short period of time, or in this case, the teaching of one specific course, the ERC, is akin to asking a Jew or Muslim, for example, to just eat a little pork once and awhile. Furthermore, state neutrality is not maintained by the imposition of radical secularism. Rather than being neutral, the state through the imposition of the radically secular ERC, is indeed subjecting our Catholic beliefs to their imposed secular world view, violating our right to practice our faith.

## Carter

The CCRL applied and has now been granted intervener status on this SCC appeal to be argued on October 15 on the issue of assisted suicide. The Carter case challenges the existing provisions against assisted suicide in the Criminal Code. The League supports the government's opposition to decriminalization.

In addition to other interveners, the CCRL will focus on the impact such a change would have on medicine and conscience rights, and the significant risks associated with adopting a euthanasia regime in Canada. A particular fear in the event of decriminalization are concerns by the elderly, the disabled or physicians and health care workers, and indeed all individuals and groups that object to assisted suicide and euthanasia for reasons of conscience and religion, that safeguards will prove inadequate from forced participation, directly or indirectly, in such objectionable actions.

The new legislation recently passed in Quebec is illustrative of these concerns, in that health care facilities will be required to facilitate "medical aid in dying" practices, despite objections from health care workers.

## Saguenay

The CCRL applied and has also been granted intervener status on this SCC appeal to be argued on October 14 on the issue of prayer at municipal council meetings. The SCC will examine the issues raised by an atheist group which has treated Christian

prayer prior to city council meetings in Saguenay as discriminatory. The CCRL has been granted status to intervene in support of inter-denominational prayer at such public events. It is our position that state neutrality does not entail the imposition of radical secularism, atheism, or agnosticism, all of which are beliefs in themselves. Canada ought to embrace an authentic pluralism by including various forms of prayer representative of the community in a manner that is not imposing, nor offensive by those who belong to a different faith group, or those who have no faith life at all.

## Trinity Western

The CCRL has previously submitted briefs to 5 provincial law societies and is now involved in two judicial review applications regarding the accreditation of future Trinity Western University (TWU) law school graduates. The judicial review applications are in response to rejections by the various law societies to prospective law graduates from Trinity Western University in British Columbia, set to commence operations in 2016. The rejections of the proposed TWU law school were based on that institution's adherence to the traditional definition of marriage in the school's community covenant.

The opposition faced by Trinity Western is yet another example of the politics of exclusion, as in the view of opponents, a traditional understanding of Christian morality is objectionable in Canada's institutions of higher learning.

## Review of Tom Langan's "An Anthology of Witness"

The CCRL is grateful to Lou Iacobelli for this review of "An Anthology of Witness". It first appeared on his blog "Everyday For Life Canada" on June 22, 2014.



An Anthology of Witness by Thomas Langan, 2013 Published by the CCRL. Copies of the book can be purchased for \$10 by emailing the CCRL at [ccrl@ccrl.ca](mailto:ccrl@ccrl.ca) or by calling (416) 466-8244 or 1-844-722-2275.

We just finished reading a great and inspirational book titled An Anthology of Witness authored by the late Thomas Langan. It's an insightful little book. He was the co-founder and former president of the Catholic Civil Rights League, CCRL. Each article in the text was written to inform and inspire League members to live the faith and not be afraid to bring it and defend it in the public

square. Langan covers many topics: Catholic education, anti-Christian defamation, marriage, the family, the human person, abortion and the ethics in stem cells research. Langan saw the League as one organization working with other groups to advocate the Christian view both locally and nationally. An Anthology of Witness is a much needed testimony in today's Canadian secular society. The CCRL started in 1985 by Professor Langan along with a small number of priests and academics. Langan was president from 1985 to 2004. The goal was to include members from across Canada. One of the key points that comes out from reading this book is about the importance of Christians to be involved in political life and be a voice to help shape the nation's social and economic policies and laws. However, this must be done in a spirit of charity and dialogue. For Langan, one must convince others through examples of living the faith and not with power, money or mere argument.

What does the CCRL do? Here's their mission statement from their website:

Catholic Civil Rights League assists in creating conditions within which Catholic teachings can be better understood, cooperates with other organizations in defending civil rights in Canada, and opposes defamation and discrimination against

Catholics on the basis of their beliefs. CCRL was founded in 1985 as an independent lay organization and has chapters across Canada. The Catholic Civil Rights League is a Canadian non-profit organization entirely supported by the generosity of its members.

In reading the book we were reminded of a recent case that we brought to the League's attention. The incident comes from last year's Stratford Festival stage production of *The Three Musketeers*. This is not a critique of the play itself, but only one element of it that we don't think appeared in the original classic. In one scene, in a convent, an "altar" is set up to celebrate Mass. There is a chalice, a paten containing hosts and, in the middle, a very large monstrance. At one point, the actress playing Milady de Winter picks up a host from the altar and snacks on it as you would a potato chip. Later, de Winter uncovers the chalice from the "altar," pouring poison into it and giving it to Constance Bonacieux to drink. This drink poisons her.

We were at the play and asked in a letter to the Festival's board of governors: Why include a chalice, an object used by Christians to celebrate the Eucharist? Why the monstrance? Why have a character snacking on a host? Many would find that sacrilegious. The loud gasp from the audience should have suggested something was not right.

In response, the board said the scene was meant to depict evil, not sanction it. While this may well have been the director's intention, but surely a depiction less directly focused on the sacrament would have been as effective.

Is it always worthwhile to protest such things? A really loud shout can sometimes backfire by only bringing publicity to a retailer or theatre company. After all, they are quite free to market legal products or stage a play. On the other hand, inaction and silence fuels apathy among Catholics and others that helps perpetuate such desecrations.

In *An Anthology of Witness* Langan argues that as Christians we need to speak up and get involved if we are going to make a difference in society. We cannot take our faith for granted anymore. Canada's comfortable faith-friendly days are gone forever. The challenge that Langan so aptly identifies is that too often there's complacency in the political and cultural realms. When this happens, others move forward with their agenda as it has with same-sex marriage, abortion, euthanasia and the oversexualization of school curricula.

In explaining as to why Christians stay on the sidelines, he writes, "Because Canadians are blessed with a peaceful society and strong political institutions, they tend to forget that nothing human persists without constant hard work to keep it on the path. There is no sense of urgency about fixing what ain't broke." In the chapter called,

"More on the Defence of Marriage," Langan offers a window into his understanding of true human dignity. He correctly states: "A society that finds little problem in abortion, euthanasia, easy divorce, cohabitation, or twelve year olds having sexual relations, requires evangelization." If one thought that the new evangelization was some general theological notion, Langan tersely puts in focus the main reason for the need to transmit the faith. Canadians have lost their moral way. The author makes many thoughtful and practical faith observations. Here are just two of them. One is, "The best gift Christians can make to their non-Christian Canadian neighbours is to succeed in being a Christian - that is to say a loving manner - in endeavouring to reverse the trend for a long slide into atheist materialism to an upsurge in authentic Christianity." And the other, "We are not made to be used by one another, nor are our bodies to be abused as playthings. The basic truth makes little sense to those who think we are just bizarre accidents of an unintelligible, complex evolution." For over a generation, much of what is Christian in Canada has been under attack: Catholic schools, the Catholic understanding of human life, sexuality, marriage and the family. Abortion is legally permitted, same-sex marriage and even euthanasia was recently approved in Quebec. We live in a culture of death and relativism where God himself is questioned and even rejected. So, Langan would argue that like the first Christians we have work to do and much to pray about. And to never, ever get discouraged because we are people of hope and we believe in a God of salvation.

Langan believes Catholics need to exert more effort and develop better strategies to respond to those who marginalize or demean Catholicism in the public forum. He advocates writing a letter to an editor, to a member of parliament, a trustee and making presentations to official bodies as well running for political office. Langan has shown us what it means to truly live the words of St. James: that faith without action is dead.

Of course the process of involvement can be very frustrating in that letters can be ignored or one gets the standard reply, and successful protests are few. Nevertheless, our concerns once public will put those that disagree on notice. Making an effort is always the first step to any change. The end goal in Langan's words is for others to "See how they love each other. Becoming ourselves as mature Christians is the key to becoming the universal catalyst we are called to be."

When we completed reading the book, we didn't want it to end because it's so engaging. But end it did. And it can be completed in just four or five hours. Langan has left the epilogue for us: to pray and be a faithful witness to our family as well as other Canadians. Buy this book and get a practical guide about living the faith. No, buy two copies and give one book to your children or a friend.

**Dear CCRL members,**

As our new database is up and running, we will update all of the membership renewals and we will contact those whose renewals are due. The process of reorganization after Joanne's passing has not been easy, though we are pleased with what we have accomplished and what lies ahead. As always, we would appreciate any donation that you can make at this time. Donations can be made through [www.ccrl.ca](http://www.ccrl.ca) or by calling our office at (416) 466-8244 or toll free at 1-844-722-CCRL (2275). As always, cheques can be mailed to our office, 2305 Bloor Street West, Toronto, ON, M6S 1P1. Thank you for your continued support.

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Executive Director

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**The Catholic Civil Rights League** [www.ccrl.ca](http://www.ccrl.ca)  
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