



COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

Statement by Vancouver Archbishop J. Michael Miller on the 25th anniversary of R. v. Morgentaler

Witnessing to life is an act of charity: Archbishop

VANCOUVER (Jan. 28, 2013) -- Twenty-five years ago, a legal decision was unleashed on Canada that has had an impact we can scarcely measure.

While some may celebrate, the sad truth is that the Supreme Court of Canada Morgentaler decision has cast a pall over Canada and led to the death of more than a million lives in the womb.

As followers of Christ, we are concerned about anything affecting human life and dignity. That is why we are involved in efforts to stem the tide of violence and war wherever they occur.

We work to alleviate poverty in all its forms in the Downtown Eastside.

We strive to implement more humane ways to handle the incarcerated, to promote fair treatment of immigrants and migrant workers, and to advance access to education.

We struggle to eliminate every form of unjust discrimination and to assure that people have the opportunity to work and that working conditions correspond to their dignity;

We reject unethical practices such as assisted suicide and euthanasia.

And we work to restore in law the right to life of the unborn threatened by abortion.

If we cannot secure the most fundamental right to life, then there is no basis for any other right at all. About this there is no doubt: from its conception, the child has the right to life.

Direct abortion and intentional euthanasia are grave contradictions of the dignity of human life and the respect due to God, our Creator. Because the embryo should be treated as a person from conception, the pre-born child must be defended in its integrity, cared for, and healed like every other human being

As Pope Benedict said, "When a society moves toward the denial or the suppression of life, it ends up no longer finding the necessary motivation and energy to strive for man's true good. If personal and social sensitivity towards the acceptance of a new life is lost, then other forms of acceptance that are valuable for society also wither away."



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In this Year of Faith, when we are invited to evangelize and deepen our relationship with Christ and His Church, I note the growing sense of hope among those working to establish a culture of life. In this we are united in a common cause.

There appears to be more enthusiasm than ever in advancing the cause of life, and all of us need to ask the Lord for increased courage to speak the truth about the inherent dignity and sacredness of human life ever more clearly, but never with hatred or disrespect for persons.

To be pro-life, to defend the right to life, means to stand up for the truth, especially the truth about the God-given dignity and worth of every human being. We must be firmly convinced that this is the truth that sets people free (cf. Jn 8:32) and to proclaim it is an act of charity.

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