

government to live up to its promises of aid to developing countries. Canada currently has no legislation on foreign aid even though all parties agree that it is long overdue.

The XVI International AIDS Conference is being held this week in Toronto. The Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign is a small yet important contribution to ease the pain of HIV/AIDS on caregivers and guardians of AIDS orphans. It is a campaign to raise awareness and mobilize support in Canada for Africa's grandmothers, who have become the heart of the response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

One provincial resolution was forwarded to this standing committee directly for action. Saskatchewan Provincial Council requested that national council urge the federal government to ban the use of terminator/genetic use restriction technology. The material provided will be added to the file for Resolution 2005.03 Protection of Farmers' Rights to Save Seed and this standing committee will continue to monitor new technologies in this area.

EDUCATION AND HEALTH



Velma Harasen

Just recently, the governing council of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research gave conditional approval for a controversial project to use "fresh" as well as frozen human embryos for stem cell research.

The project will use surplus embryos donated by people who have undergone fertility treatment.

The League, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and COLF made official submissions to Health Canada opposing pre-implantation genetic diagnosis. This controversial test analyzes a single cell to determine which embryos carry gene defects. It reveals the gender and may be able to pick out embryos destined to have high intelligence, blond hair and blue eyes. It was announced just last week that a U.S. embryonic bank has begun to create and sell embryos with specific genetic characteristics, matching to clients' preferences.

The League was represented at the Catholic Health Association of Canada National Convention 2006, as well as at the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute (CCBI) conference. Thanks to Life Member Carmel Rumleski who attended monthly sessions at CCBI where scholarly papers on current topics were presented and reviewed. The CCBI has developed an educational program entitled For People in the Pews: An Introduction to Current Issues in Bioethics

from a Roman Catholic Perspective. This four-part series is available by contacting CCBI.

A new oral contraceptive called Anya, developed to "... put women in control of when or if they want to menstruate," is expected to hit the Canadian market this year. Early findings report this drug is 98% effective in preventing pregnancy. A second prescription medication called Seasonale, already approved in the United States and under consideration in Canada, reduces annual periods. This drug saw millions of dollars in sales last year! No studies have been performed, and researchers worry about the long-term health effects these drugs may have, not to mention the moral and ethical issues. We must oppose the approval of such drugs, perhaps starting with a letter-writing campaign to the health minister.

Donations to the MaterCare National Voluntary Fund for the period July 1, 2005, to June 30, 2006, increased again to \$35,453.38. MaterCare continues to expand and we are pleased that Executive Director Dr. Robert Walley was with us to provide an update.

Donations to the Coady National Voluntary Fund increased to \$29,086.68, providing for four scholarships.

The deadline date for national bursary fund applications was changed to May 31st. By teleconference call in June, 25 applications were reviewed and 21 bursaries awarded for a total of \$6,800.

B.C. & Yukon Provincial Council requested that members discontinue use of polystyrene disposable ware in favour of biodegradable cardboard products, and that parish councils encourage their parishes to do the same. A second resolution from B.C. & Yukon Provincial Council requested that members educate themselves and their families about obstructive sleep apnea. A resolution from Ontario Provincial Council urged members to become aware of the use and abuse of plastic bags, encourage reduction of single-use bags and start using alternatives.

My thanks to all the chairpersons of education and health at all levels for your untiring efforts, and I thank my sub-committee chairpersons.

COMMUNICATIONS



Lucille Partington

I believe that the professionalism of national office staff and the quality of the work done by national executive members means that