

Christian Family Life Chairperson Dorothy Johansen

Madame president,

“Let us hold unwaveringly to our confession that gives us hope, for he who made the promise is trustworthy. We must consider how to rouse one another to love and good works. We should not stay away from our assembly, as is the custom of some, but encourage one another, and this all the more as you see the day drawing near” (Heb 10:23-25).

Sanctity of Life

It has been over 60 years that we have been vocal about our opposition to abortion, and after the law against limited cases of abortion was struck down in 1988, Canada allows abortions at any time during pregnancy. As abortion is considered a provincially supplied medical procedure, it requires each of us in our provinces and territories to advocate for limitations on abortion and increased support for women who decide to choose life. We also need to continue to support families in raising their children, as the first few years of life can be the most difficult.

In some provinces, an increase in spending for palliative care was recorded, but it was discovered that the medical care code for medical assistance in dying (MAiD) was the same code used for palliative care in a number of provinces. So that might be another thing to check in your province—are the codes different, one for palliative care and one for MAiD? The codes I’m talking about are the ones that doctors use to collect their funding from the province. With only ten countries in the world allowing MAiD, Canada has the most progressive regime. While the offering of MAiD to people with mental illness has been granted a short reprieve for implementation, we need to continue to advocate for providing good palliative care and less MAiD to everyone and for our palliative care facilities to be allowed to abstain from providing this procedure. We also need to inform our governments that funeral homes and long-term care facilities are not appropriate locations for MAiD.

For the period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, \$250.00 was submitted to national office as a donation for Euthanasia Prevention Coalition. I will note that it is no longer a temporary voluntary fund under national council. This does not mean we no longer support it—it means that you all know enough about it that you can send money directly. Please consider supporting this organization or organizations that provide training, education or advocacy for palliative care and for ending MAiD. As well, consider which palliative care facility is nearest to you and determine how your council can best support their efforts.

Marriage and Family, Youth, Seniors, Separated, Widowed, Divorced

The Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life was established by Pope Francis on August 15, 2016. “The Dicastery has responsibility in the areas that fall within the competence of the [Holy] See for the development of the life and apostolate of the lay faithful, for the pastoral care of young people and the family and its mission according to God’s plan, and for the protection and support of human life. The Dicastery supports and organises international conferences and other initiatives related to these themes that take into account both the ecclesial and broader spheres of society.” If you search for Laity Family Life (laityfamilylife.va/), you will find many events and resources on the topics of family life, youth and the elderly.

Vocations

There is now a very good resource with information from the National Association of Vocation & Formation Directors. They are an association of Canadian Catholic leaders committed to helping other members of Christ's body to discover and live their vocations. This site, vocations.ca, is one of their tools. It contains resources for discernment of being called, information about the types of vocations, including marriage and lay organizations and also links to information to the communities in Canada.

This concludes my report. †