



*NEWS ARCHIVE:*

## **Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon**

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# **National Pro-Life Conference held in Saskatoon: Building Bridges**

**By Kiply Lukan Yaworski**

Some 250 people gathered in Saskatoon for a National Pro-Life Conference Oct. 29-31, discussing life issues and strengthening connections among different facets of the pro-life movement.

Protecting life from fertilization to natural death is the pro-life movement's goal, said Muriel Nielsen, president of the Saskatchewan Pro-Life Association, welcoming delegates from across the country to the convention.

"Building Bridges: Making choices for life" was the theme of the three-day conference that included annual meetings for LifeCanada and Saskatchewan Pro-Life Association, several keynote speakers, panel discussions, prayer services, and a Friday evening banquet.

"We must build bridges to other groups so we can be more effective in the work we do," said Nicole Pyle, Saskatoon chair of the National Pro-Life Conference Committee.

"No pro-life organization has it all. We must help each other reach our vital goals to save babies, to help women make informed decisions, to make sure that those hurting because of an abortion know that God loves them and is ready to heal their silent pain, and now (we have) a new goal, to tell our seniors and our parents that we love them, and we want them to live until our Creator takes them," said Pyle.

Pregnancy centres, crisis lines, pro-life education centres, websites like Pro Woman Pro Life, groups such as Birthright, Rachel's Vineyard, Silent No More, and the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, as well as political pro-life organizations, all have a role to play in the pro-life movement, she said.

"We are all companions on the same journey; companions in making this a culture of life," agreed Dr. Delores Sparagna Doherty, president of LifeCanada-VieCanada.

Doherty noted the high numbers of youth registered for the national conference, adding that the gathering provides encouragement and inspiration to help individuals continue their often challenging work in the pro-life movement.

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Jim Hughes of Campaign Life coalition said it is important to know that pro-life work makes a difference. For instance, a “pennies for the unborn” campaign started by his own mother has raised more than \$100,000.

Hughes also related how a woman came into the Campaign Life office to say that seeing the signs displayed at a Life Chain demonstration changed her mind about having an abortion – as a result, her five-year-old daughter is alive today. “It is all worth it,” he said.



**Andrea Mrozek**

In an opening keynote Oct. 29, Andrea Mrozek described her efforts to deliver the message that abortion harms women – in particular through her website and blog “Pro Woman Pro Life.”

Mrozek said she hopes to fill a niche in getting out the pro-life message, focusing in particular on young women – “people who only ever heard one side of the argument.”

She expressed her frustration with how many well-meaning people unquestioningly accept that abortion is a woman’s right crucial to women’s freedom and equality, when in reality, abortion is a grave injustice, which in addition to taking the lives of unborn children, harms all women. “Abortion takes a life, it doesn’t serve women well, and we can do better than this,” Mrozek said, adding that women rarely choose abortion freely, but are subject to pressure from others, often going against their own maternal desires or moral beliefs.

Studies that show long-term health concerns and psychological fallout related to abortion are not covered in the mainstream media, Mrozek said. She also pointed to the “global war on baby girls” which Nicholas Eberstadt described in a recent address to the United Nations – which includes the abortion of female children by those selecting the sex of their child. Early feminists were not in favour of abortion, she observed, suggesting their own experience of being denied the status of person made them abhor the idea of denying personhood to another group of human beings.



In his address opening sessions Oct. 30, Rev. James Lamb, executive director of Lutherans for Life in the United States, spoke about the scriptural and faith imperative to imitate Christ and “cherish the children” because each one is precious to God.

“Our starting point for cherishing the children is knowing how much we are cherished by God,” said Lamb, “Scripturally, a child is anyone who is vulnerable and in need, who needs to be loved, who needs to be cherished, who needs to be protected,” Lamb said, adding that as the hands and feet of Christ, Christians have Jesus himself to offer to those who are despised, suffering, and downtrodden.”

“We are for life because God is for life,” he said, adding that the struggle for life is taking place within the victory that Christ has already won. “We need more of our fellow Christian to wake up and move out and make a difference as shining lights in the world.”

Speaker at the banquet was Ezra Levant, who is calling for an investigation into the work of the Canadian Human Rights Commission. Levant was subject of a complaint to the Alberta Human Rights Commission for reprinting the Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad in the Western Standard magazine. The complaint was eventually dismissed.

Other speakers at the national conference included Alex Schadenberg of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition (see related article); Dr. Larry Reynolds, a family physician from Winnipeg; Samantha Singson, director of government relations for the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute, who has worked as a pro-life lobbyist at the United Nations; John-Henry Westen, co-founder of LifeSite News; Winnipeg-South MP Rod Bruinooge, a member of the multi-party pro-life caucus; and Rev. Louis DiRocco, a priest of the Archdiocese of Kingston who worked fulltime for Campaign Life Coalition for a number of years as a pro-life lobbyist at the United Nations.

A student panel included Leah Hallman of the University of Calgary; Renee Schmitz, assistant western director of the National Campus Life Network; and Dax Rumsey of the University of Saskatchewan. The panel discussed the challenges of bringing the pro-life message to university campuses.



**Rev. James Lamb  
Lutherans For Life**



## Schadenberg discusses Euthanasia bill at Pro-Life Conference held in Saskatoon

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

It is vital to be absolutely clear about what euthanasia and assisted suicide actually involve, said Alex Schadenberg of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition in an address Oct. 30 at a National Pro-Life Conference in Saskatoon.

Euthanasia and assisted suicide are about one person directly and intentionally ending the life of another person, said Schadenberg. He described how euthanasia advocates will use terms like “aid in dying” and “compassionate choices” to try to win support for the legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide.

“Bill C-384 is not about the right to die with dignity. This bill is not creating better access to actual palliative care,” said Schadenberg. Rather it is an attempt to give medical practitioners the right to directly take someone else’s life, he stressed.

Euthanasia is not the same as withholding or refusing aggressive or unwanted medical treatment, Schadenberg said.

“Every day in our hospitals we remove life-sustaining medical treatment from some people who are actually dying. But that’s not euthanasia. That’s natural death. That person dies of their medical condition,” he said.



Using high dosages of pain medication to kill pain is not euthanasia. It becomes euthanasia only if the intention is to kill the patient, said Schadenberg. “We’re about caring for people, not killing them.”

Bill C-384 is the latest attempt to legalize euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada, introduced as a private members bill by Francine Lalonde, a Parti Quebecois MP. It will have its second hour of debate Dec. 1, and the vote is now scheduled for Dec. 2.

Schadenberg examined the bill in detail, saying it was virtually without safeguards.

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“It’s not limited to the terminally ill, it does not require having tried effective treatment,” he said. Bill C-384 stated that a person requesting euthanasia or assisted suicide must “appear to be lucid,” but that is not the same as actually being lucid, Schadenberg stressed. “Can the person who lives with chronic depression, who ‘appears to be lucid’, make a free choice? Choice is a lie.”

The bill does not define terminal illness, he added, noting that many have conditions that are terminal, particularly if we refuse treatment – for instance, someone with diabetes who refuses insulin has a terminal illness.

The bill does not require a witness at the time of death, and permits “after the fact” reporting. Bill C-384 does not restrict euthanasia and assisted suicide to residents of Canada, which would open the door to the kind of “death tourism” experienced by Switzerland, Schadenberg pointed out.

Bill C-384 directly threatens the lives of people with disabilities and chronic conditions, because their situation is often perceived as having “no prospect of relief,” said Schadenberg. Judgments and perceptions about someone else’s quality of life may are not necessarily true, he said, noting that one of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition’s greatest allies in the political arena is the Council of Canadians with Disabilities.

He noted a report revealing that 550 people were euthanized without consent in the Netherlands in 2005.

Schadenberg also discussed the Groningen Protocol, which was developed in the Netherlands for infant euthanasia. Although it is not legal to euthanize someone under the age of 12 years in the Netherlands, doctors euthanizing infants are not prosecuted if they follow this protocol.

Different groups of infants are identified, Schadenberg described. The first group consists of infants with no chance of survival. “I ask the question, if they are going to die anyway, why must you euthanize them? Why can’t you palliate, and allow them to die with true dignity?”

Infants in the second group may survive, but expectations are grim. “How are they going to know that in the first month of life? These children would survive with significant medical treatment.”

Infants in the third group have a poor prognosis, but do not need medical treatment to survive. However, their condition is such that they are judged to be better off dead, said Schadenberg, noting that the protocol is not limited to present suffering, but even “possible future suffering.”

“It’s not about choice. These babies don’t choose. It’s about cost containment and it’s about eugenics.”

Schadenberg said that polls show that Canadians are not committed to euthanasia, but are fearful and



concerned about end of life care and want compassionate palliative treatment. Polls show that Canadians also have serious reservations about how euthanasia and assisted suicide might impact the disabled, the elderly, and patient-doctor trust, he said.

He encouraged his listeners to continue telling the stories that show the reality of euthanasia and assisted suicide, and to persevere in opposing efforts to introduce these practices in Canada.

“We can’t afford to lose this battle. To lose this battle will result in the death of many people.”