



RESPECT LIFE SUNDAY

October 1, 2011

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Today we mark "Respect Life Sunday." Today, people of faith across our country of Canada and beyond will pause to pray for a renewal of respect for life in all its stages and in all of its seasons and colours. Our faith calls on us to recognize life as a gift from our Creator. Faith also requires that we support and defend life.

To be pro-life means to be a defender and protector of all life. We are followers of Jesus Christ, who had a very special place in His heart for people who were marginalized in any way because of illness, age, infirmity, nationality, or prejudice. Therefore, we stand for all life, and we stand with those who suffer or are marginalized in any way or for any reason.

We know that, because of Canada's lack of a law protecting the unborn, that we must do all in our power to defend the life of every child in the womb of its mother from the moment of conception. There is nothing that can substitute for this teaching. It is wrong for anyone to procure an abortion or to actively assist in the taking of life. On this Respect Life Sunday, let us all renew our commitment to defend life, especially life in the womb.

We are all well aware that, in our nation, it is the law that, under certain conditions, it is possible to procure the assistance of a doctor in causing or hastening one's own death. As Catholics, we believe that to seek or provide medical assistance in dying is gravely wrong and therefore, as a Church, we advocate for better palliative care and hospice services, so that any dying person, no matter where they live, can have access to a death with dignity and without excessive pain.

To respect life goes beyond these areas, as we all know. In the arena of justice, we are called to hear the cries of those people who are the victims of human trafficking, and we must build a world and a society in which all people are treated in a manner consistent with their human dignity. This stance extends also to those in our society who are homeless, poor, unemployed, and those who lack the basic necessities for a life of dignity.

This Respect Life Sunday, let us renew our commitment to, and with, and for any person or group that exists on the margins, whose rights and dignity are threatened. They are our sisters and brothers. Jesus came that we might have life, and have it abundantly. Let each of us be means and ministers of fullness of life.

Sincerely yours in Christ,


Most Reverend Martin W. Currie, D.D.
Archbishop of St. John's