

# The Interim PLUS

## Curriculum Supplement For Schools

The *Interim Plus* is a periodical dedicated to educational matters and specifically designed to assist teachers in integrating relevant life issues in their lesson planning.

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Human Justice

Congratulations and welcome back. First semester marking is done. Teachers can look forward to a terrific 2<sup>nd</sup> semester.

The Interim Plus this month announces the winning candidates in the Father Ted Colleton Scholarship. As well, several developments offer the opportunity to reflect on the life issues debate.

The Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario has released a document called **Fundamental Principles of Catholic Social Teaching (FPCST)**. Interestingly enough it relates directly to the theme of the recently concluded Father Ted Colleton Scholarship contest. We shall feature the ideas presented by those scholarship candidates in our next edition. In this edition we look at the document **FPCST**.

A distinct type of writing can also offer valuable insights into the seeming complexity of judicial decisions rendered by Canadian judges. Interim columnist Joe Campbell expresses his puzzlement at the unusual mental gymnastics engaged in by the legal establishment in Canada. In his own unique manner Joe Campbell shows how the issue of euthanasia in Canada gives much cause for concern.

Finally, there is a third topic touching on a new biological finding related to human pregnancy. According to the article, taken from Scientific American magazine, microchimeric cells are transferred from the baby to the mother.

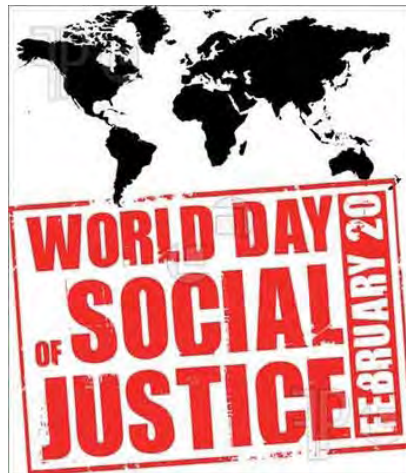
Please share with colleagues and make use of the information however you see fit in lesson planning or in assignments given to students.

## Human Justice Issues

What is meant by social justice? A young Canadian blogger named Bilaal Rajanthe probably expresses the popular definition of the term:

*Although not a controversial subject, the term "social justice" means different things to different people. Generally speaking, the concept refers to policies that ensure equality and fairness to all people, regardless of their gender, ethnicity, age, economic class, nationality or religion.*

*It also includes every individual's right to speak out, vote, participate in the political process, and join an organi-*



*zation of their choosing. Social justice also entails economic rights for all people, including the right to a good-paying job, health care, education, housing and an overall decent standard of living.*

*Sounds almost impossible, doesn't it? But for many people in Canada and other countries around the world, many of these rights have generally been achieved. It certainly didn't come about overnight, and there's a lot more work to do right here in Canada with regards to issues like equal rights, homelessness, and poverty, but just think of the huge progress we've made over the 100 years, or even 25.*

[makingchangenow.com](http://makingchangenow.com)

On the face of it, it certainly sounds totally true and convincing. But is it correct? Is there an a priori assumption at work in this definition? How is it limited? All the rights and fairness he is talking about are only possible for people who are alive and able to enjoy the potential inherent in being alive after birth. But what about those who are alive in the womb and are not allowed to be born? Do they not have a social justice claim on life itself?

As mentioned, the theme for this year's Father Ted Colleton Scholarship was taken from George Weigel's, article in *First Things* magazine (<http://www.firstthings.com/>). He was speaking about social justice issues being priority issues, and life issues being the paramount social justice issue of our time.

One can see from Rajan's premise that all too often the issue of social justice teaching has been ignored in terms of life issues and made to apply only to concerns about social, political and economic issues (like discrimination, political oppression, or unfair wages). No one quarrels with the list. These are definite social justice issues, but



shouldn't life issues take precedence over all other issues? Church teachings on these issues are largely informed by Gospel values and contain principles for reflection, criteria for judgment and guidelines for action as outlined for example on the website of a U.K diocese. (<http://www.catholic-socialteaching.org.uk/principles/>) The principles of Catholic social teaching for example stem from the Bible and the many documents written, preached and defended by Church's leaders over the past century and a half in response to the injustices of the industrialization of society and the threat of materialistic ideologies like communism. The problems and injustices that arose were not just those of unfair wages, poor labour conditions, concentration of wealth and social class strife, creation of poverty, unemployment, etc. New pressures threatened the stability of families and the institution of marriage, and brought into question the dignity and value of human life itself. It is with respect to this last point that the focus has changed recently. It is now the central issue because the right to life is the most fundamental of all human rights.

For an even more recent explanation of the change on this matter see the short interview on LifeSite News that its editor recorded with a Vatican spokesperson - **Bishop Ignacio Carrasco de Paula**, the President of the Pontifical Academy for Life about the Pope's insistence that the pro-life issue is central to the social justice mission of the Church.

**For the full interview go to:**

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/pro-life-as-social-justice-is-evident-to-anyone-with-a-minimum-of-wisdom-va>

The main points of Bishop Carrasco was that prior to the middle of the last century there was a general agreement among people that human life was good, something priceless and to be respected. *But the growth of the population was proposed as a great danger for human survival, and some people, governments and international organizations and agencies... began to take measures against life, to limit the number of people.* But truly there are many reasons for the threats to human life and the devaluing of human



life itself – great developments such as the experience of the world wars, the feminist revolution, the rise of an anti-war movement, rise of a hedonistic playboy philosophy, and the development and widespread use of birth control pills that change human behaviour and human attitudes toward marriage, family, and human life itself. Concern was focused on poverty, lack of material development in newly independent nations, violence from war and revolutions – so social justice issues and church teaching on them seemed to concentrate on the social impact of these realities, peace, development and the environment, child labour, unfair wages, inequality between men and women etc. and not so much on the problem of attacks on human life before that life was even born.

The new document published by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario echoes what Pope Benedict had earlier outlined clearly in his encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*. Teachers and students would benefit in reading the encyclical and the more modest **Fundamental Principles of Catholic Social Teaching (FPCST)** in their entirety. For the sake of space we are highlighting a few aspects and including some questions and activities regarding the latter document.

<http://www.catholic-socialteaching.org.uk/principles/>

The Ontario document identifies four fundamental principles of the Church's Social Teaching: the dignity of the human person, the common good, subsidiarity and solidarity. They go on to explain that from these basic principles flow the other principles of the Church's Social Teaching, such as human rights (*first of all, the right to life*), *universal sharing in the goods of the earth, private property, the preferential option for the poor, participation in government and society; and the application of these principles to the family, government and political life, human work, economic life, the environment, governance of the international community and the promotion of peace.* (FPCST)

### Number 1 Human Dignity

*Our God-given dignity as human persons with human rights comes from having been created by God and being capable of knowing, loving and glorifying God, unlike all other earthly creatures.*

*The right to life from conception to natural death is the basic human right, the condition for the exercise of all other human rights, such as the rights of the child to live in a united family and a moral environment, the right to food, clean water, clothing and shelter, as well as health care, education and truth, the right to work, the right to marry and have a family, free speech, the right to participate in society and government, and religious freedom.*

### Number 2 The Common Good

*The common good means achieving the conditions that make it possible for all to come to their full potential as persons and to become all that God intends them to be. From the principle of the common good flow the following: Right to the goods of the earth for all; Right to pri-*



vate property and its social function; Preferential option for the poor and their needs; Care for the environment; and Promotion of peace.

### Number 3 Subsidiarity

*The principle of subsidiarity means that every group or body in society must have the freedom and the means to do what it can best do for itself without its activity being taken over by a higher body or level of government. In other words: "Don't take over what others can do for themselves".*

*To the principle of subsidiarity corresponds the principle of participation in society and government whereby the citizen, either as an individual or in association with others, (e.g. a labour union), takes part in the cultural, economic, political and social life of the civil community.*

### Number 4 Solidarity

*We are all our brothers' and sisters' keepers. We are one family. This leads to choices that promote and protect the good of all. There is an intimate bond between solidarity and the common good, between solidarity and the universal sharing of goods, between solidarity and peace in the world.*

*...To bring about changes, to establish just systems and practices, we have to work with others and build up a force that can go against the prevailing current. We have to practice the virtues of social justice and social love. The virtue of social justice obliges each of us to work with others to change unjust systems and practices and create structures which work for the common good, the good of each and all.*

### Questions

1. Does this claim for human dignity make sense to you as a student? Are there other possible base sources of human dignity?
2. How are you expected to respect other persons' dignity, in your family, in a school group, or in social circles that you find yourself in?
3. How can you influence your peers to resist stereotyping other people?
4. Do you see situations where individuals or groups are taking over what other individuals or groups can do for themselves? Is our society becoming too dependent on government and social agencies?
5. What needs to happen to restore and strengthen self-reliance so that there is true subsidiarity at work?
6. Is real social change possible, and what would help bring it about?
7. What particular challenges are there in putting these 4 principles of social justice into practice at school? Or in the community at large? In the work place? In the political field?
8. How might these principles be judged and supported/or not by the media, by politician, the busi-

nessman, the unionist, the wealthy person, the poor person, the aboriginal?

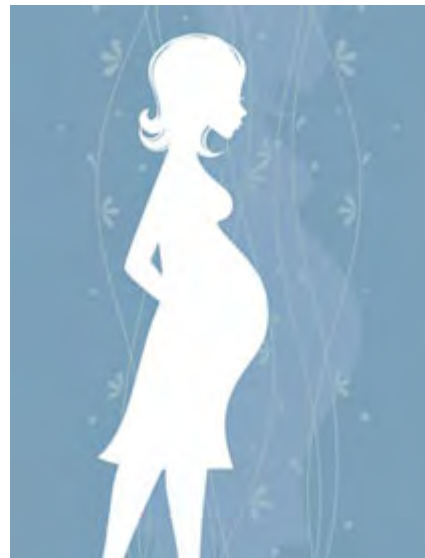
9. Which principle would be seen as doable and which sort of dreamy, not realistic? Which social issues seem to have priority?
10. Is the gift of life really appreciated as the first priority?
11. What are we being called to do about abortion and euthanasia?
12. What are you doing in your school? How could you do more? What are you called to do about this tragedy and injustice?



### Scientists Discover Children's Cells Living in Mothers' Brains

The connection between mother and child is ever deeper than thought

By Robert Martone



The link between a mother and child is profound, and new research suggests a physical connection even deeper than anyone thought. The profound psychological and physical bonds shared by the mother and her child begin during gestation when the mother is everything for the developing fetus, supplying warmth and sustenance, while her heartbeat

provides a soothing constant rhythm.

The physical connection between mother and fetus is provided by the placenta, an organ, built of cells from both the mother and fetus, which serves as a conduit for the exchange of nutrients, gasses, and wastes. Cells may migrate through the placenta between the mother and the fetus, taking up residence in many organs of the body

including the lung, thyroid muscle, liver, heart, kidney and skin. These may have a broad range of impacts, from tissue repair and **cancer** prevention to sparking immune disorders.

It is remarkable that it is so common for cells from one individual to integrate into the tissues of another distinct person. We are accustomed to thinking of ourselves as singular autonomous individuals, and these foreign cells seem to belie that notion, and suggest that most people carry remnants of other individuals. As remarkable as this may be, stunning results from a **new study** show that cells from other individuals are also found in the brain. In this study, male cells were found in the brains of women and had been living there, in some cases, for several decades.



What impact they may have had is now only a guess, but this study revealed that these cells were less common in the brains of women who had Alzheimer's disease, suggesting they may be related to the health of the brain.

We all consider our bodies to be our own unique being, so the notion that we may harbor cells from other people in our bodies seems strange. Even stranger is the thought that, although we certainly consider our

actions and decisions as originating in the activity of our own individual brains, cells from other individuals are living and functioning in that complex structure. However, the mixing of cells from genetically distinct individuals is not at all uncommon. This condition is called chimerism after the fire-breathing Chimera from Greek mythology, a creature that was part serpent part lion and part goat. Naturally occurring chimeras are far less ominous though.



and include such creatures as the slime mold and corals. [livingwithcerebralpalsy.com](http://livingwithcerebralpalsy.com)

**Microchimerism** is the persistent presence of a few genetically distinct cells in an organism. This was first noticed in humans many years ago when cells containing the male "Y" chromosome were found circulating in the blood of women after pregnancy. Since these cells are genetically male, they could not have been the women's own, but most likely came from their babies during gestation.

In this new study, scientists observed that microchimeric cells are not only found circulating in the blood, they are also embedded in the brain. They examined the brains of deceased women for the presence of cells containing the male "Y" chromosome. They found such cells in more



than 60 percent of the brains and in multiple brain regions. Since Alzheimer's disease is more common in women who have had **multiple pregnancies**, they suspected that the number of fetal cells would be greater in women with AD compared to those who had no evidence for neurological disease. The results were precisely the opposite: there were fewer fetal-derived cells in women with Alzheimer's. The reasons are unclear.

[hotthyroidology.com](http://hotthyroidology.com)

Microchimerism most commonly results from the exchange of cells across the placenta during pregnancy, however there is also evidence that cells may be transferred from mother to infant through **nursing**. In addition to exchange between mother and fetus, there may be exchange of cells between twins *in utero*, and there is also the possibility that cells from an older sibling residing in the mother may find their way back across the placenta to a younger sibling during the latter's gestation. Women may have microchimeric cells both from their mother as well as from their own pregnancies, and there is even **evidence** for competition between cells from grandmother and infant within the mother.

What it is that fetal microchimeric cells do in the mother's body is unclear, although there are some intriguing possibilities. For example, fetal microchimeric cells are similar to **stem cells** in that they are able to become a variety of different tissues and may aid in tissue repair. One research group investigating this possibility followed the activity of fetal microchimeric cells in a mother rat after the maternal heart was **injured**: they discovered that the fetal cells migrated to the maternal heart and differentiated into heart cells helping to **repair** the damage. In animal studies, microchimeric cells were found in **maternal brains** where they became **nerve cells**, suggesting they might be functionally integrated in the brain. It is possible that the same may true of such cells in the human brain. These microchimeric cells may also influence the immune system. A



## Unnatural law

Joe Campbell, *The Interim*, January 2013

I don't have a supple mind. Unlike some highly trained professionals, I can't abide contradictions. When a British Columbia judge ruled that the right to life can also mean the right to death, I realized how inflexible my non-professional intellect is.

I couldn't hand down a ruling like that. Of course, I couldn't. I'm not a judge. But even if I were a Supreme Court justice, I couldn't do it. Contradictions don't dwell peaceably in my mind. They never have. Paradoxes I can reconcile and enjoy. But paradoxes are only apparent contradictions. Inconsistencies I can't reconcile and I don't enjoy. Inconsistencies are real contradictions.

Laws against assisted suicide, the learned judge, Lynn Smith, ruled, unjustifiably infringe on the right to life, liberty and security of the person. Not being a judge, I can't figure out how laws that forbid helping us kill ourselves deny our right to life; how laws that allow helping us kill ourselves affirm our right to life. Denying assisted suicide, in my non-judicial opinion, affirms life, whereas affirming



assisted suicide denies life.

I also can't figure out how laws that forbid helping us kill ourselves deny our right to liberty and security. Maybe the judge heard convincing testimony that life is freer and safer after death than before. If so, she appears not to have heard equally convincing testimony that anyone who chooses suicide with full knowledge and consent may have difficulty reaching that heavenly state. Even I know that plea-bargaining has its limits.

But judges have been dancing with death since Parliament entrenched a right to life in our Constitution. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms empowered them to impose nation-wide fatal rulings with full knowledge and consent. You could say that the Charter granted judges more consequential rights and freedoms than anyone else. So, while upholding the right to life, they stripped the lives of the unborn of legal protection and elevated life denying sexual unions to the level of life affirming marriages.

Judges aren't the only professionals who make contradictory decisions. The editor-in-chief of the Canadian Medical

fetal microchimeric cell from a pregnancy is recognized by the mother's immune system partly as belonging to the mother, since the fetus is genetically half identical to the mother, but partly foreign, due to the father's genetic contribution. This may "prime" the immune system to be alert for cells that are similar to the self, but with some genetic differences. **Cancer** cells which arise due to genetic mutations are just such cells, and there are studies which suggest that microchimeric cells may stimulate the immune system to stem the growth of tumors. Many more microchimeric cells are found in the blood of healthy women compared to those with **breast cancer**, for example, suggesting that microchimeric cells can somehow prevent tumor formation. In other circumstances, the immune system turns against the self, causing significant damage. Microchimerism is **more common** in patients suffering from Multiple Sclerosis than in their healthy siblings, suggesting chimeric cells may have a detrimental role in this disease, perhaps by setting off an autoimmune attack.

This is a burgeoning new field of inquiry with tremendous potential for novel findings as well as for practical applications. But it is also a reminder of our interconnectedness.

**Robert Martone** is the Neuroscience therapeutic area lead for The Covance Biomarker Center of Excellence located in Greenfield, Indiana. He is a research scientist with extensive experience in drug discovery for neurodegenerative diseases.

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=scientists-discover-childrens-cells-living-in-mothers-brain>

### Questions for reflection

1. What is stunning about the findings being reported in the article?
2. What do these findings suggest about the relationship between mother and child?
3. Is the child totally dependent on the mother or is the mother in some way also dependent on the child?
4. What is novel about these findings?
5. How does the child possibly influence the health of the mother?
6. Are the cells of one individual transferred to another person's brain?
7. What is the author referring to with "most people carry remnants of other individuals."?
8. What is "microchimerism"? How are cells transferred between siblings, parents, and across generations?
9. What are some possibilities as to what fetal microchimeric cells do in a mother's body?
10. How might these findings change our understanding of the human person and the interdependency of human beings? Are there any implications for the practice of abortion?

Association Journal has opted against spanking, because it punishes children violently. But the Canadian Medical Association, which publishes the journal, has opted for abortion, even though it kills children violently.

The editor cites research suggesting that spanked children may turn into maladjusted adults. At least the medical association needn't worry that aborted children may turn into maladjusted adults. Maybe the CMA considers abortion preventive medicine. Come to think of it, maybe the British Columbia judge considers assisted suicide preven-



tive medicine. It prevents the need for palliative care.

When I complained to my good friend Dingwall, he denied that judges and doctors are inconsistent. "They're commitment to human rights is consistent with moral relativism," he said.

"Moral relativism itself is inconsistent," I protested.

"Only if rights are entrenched in an unchanging reality," he replied. "If their meaning changes according to human will or whim, moral relativism is consistent with the changes.

"The right to life is entrenched in the Charter," I said.

"But what is the Charter entrenched in?"

"An Act of Parliament interpreted by the judiciary," I said.

"Neither of which is an unchanging reality," Dingwall replied, "Under relativism, the right to life is a social construct, and what is constructed can be deconstructed."

I couldn't help but agree that it was being deconstructed as we spoke.

"If rights are relative to changing circumstances rather than unchanging principles," he continued, "to complain of inconsistencies makes no sense. Circumstances are changeable by definition. Essential principles are not."

"Essential principles?"

"Principles that defend and promote goods fundamental to our unchanging human nature, principles of natural law."

"People change," I said.

"But not their rational nature. Change that and they would no longer be people."

"Under current and proposed unnatural law," I said, "some

are no longer treated as people."

"Natural law isn't only about rights," Dingwall went on, "but also about duties. Because we have a duty to complete our human project, we have a right to the means. Rights are claims we make on others. Duties are claims our nature makes on us. If there weren't any others, we would have duties but no rights."

"Are you stating that if I were the only person alive I would have no rights?"

"We don't say that our right to life would be violated if a virus, an animal or a tornado were to kill us. We only say so if a rational human were to do it."

"Maybe so, Dingwall, but irrational humans already do it legally, and propose to do more of it."

## Questions

1. What inconsistencies is Joe Campbell talking about?
2. Why does he find them unacceptable?
3. Is he correct in his assessment of the rulings? Why or why not?
4. "Under relativism, the right to life is a social construct, and what is constructed can be deconstructed." What is meant by this statement? Give an example.
5. Is his sense of humour helpful in appreciating the problem or is it distracting?
6. What is the case that he makes against the judge?
7. Are the rulings sensible or contrary to plain human wisdom?
8. What is the relationship between rights and duties according to Campbell?
9. Is his concluding statement a paradox?
10. The title of the article is "Unnatural Law". How does it fit the content of the article?

The push to legalize euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada continues unabated. In the article from LifeSite News, the Quebec government tries to do an end run around the criminal code of Canada. This development gives further credence to the satire of Joe Campbell in the preceding article.

**'Don't let Quebec get away with murder': pro-life group demands feds stop euthanasia plan**

Peter Baklinski, Jan 23 (LifeSiteNews.com)

The political arm of Canada's pro-life movement is urging the federal Justice Minister to use "whatever legal or punitive measures are necessary" to prevent Quebec from "legalizing euthanasia" and thereby violating the country's Criminal Code.



Jim Hughes

“The PQ government does not appear to respect human life or the law,” said Jim Hughes, National President of Campaign Life Coalition (CLC) in a [press release](#).

“Legalizing euthanasia would transform the doctor into a killer,” he said. “Prime Minister Harper and Justice Minister Nicholson cannot let the Quebec politicians get away with murder.”

The Quebec government [has announced plans](#) to legalize “medical aid in dying” in the coming months. The decision came after a panel of legal experts issued a 400-page report arguing that the province can circumvent Canada’s federal criminal code.

“The Quebec legislature has the constitutional power to organize the required legal framework for end-of-life care within the health-care system,” the report reads.

According to section 241 of the criminal code, “every one who (a) counsels a person to commit suicide, or (b) aids or abets a person to commit suicide, whether suicide ensues or not, is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen years.”

Quebec’s bishops [have condemned](#) the province’s euthanasia proposal as “dangerous”, saying that it confuses “intentionally causing the death of a patient” with medical care.

“There is every reason to worry when so intentionally causing death is considered a ‘care’ and when it is claimed as a ‘right,’” the bishops said in a press release last Friday.

“Respect for human dignity primarily involves respect for human life.”

Geriatrician Catherine Ferrier of Physicians’ Alliance for Total Refusal of Euthanasia (PATRE), [accused](#) the Quebec government of operating by a “dangerous legal vision.”

“This report is the work of some hand-picked lawyers who present the act of doctors killing patients as if it were part of a natural continuum with good end-of-life care,” said Ferrier.

“They and the politicians who appointed them introduce the term ‘medically-assisted dying’ as if it were something different from killing patients.”

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/news/dont-let-quebec-get-away-with-murder-pro-life-group-demands-feds-stop-eutha>

### Murder by numbers

Editorial, *The Interim*, January 2013

Behind every legal fiction lies an ugly, brutal fact. The incoherent contradiction in Canadian law which maintains that life only begins at birth has allowed the silent slaughter of an untold number of nascent human lives; and, thus, for more than 40 years, unborn children in Canada have been

extinguished behind the thin screen of a preposterous pretense. This contradiction has resulted in a predictable but unsustainable situation: like a virulent and dangerous contagion, the attitude towards human life that this lawful annihilation has nurtured cannot be contained by its enabling legal lie.

A terrifying statistical snapshot puts this case in point. LifesiteNews recently reported the findings of an intrepid pro-life investigator who, simply by using publicly available information, found that between 2000 and 2009, there were 491 abortions which resulted in “live births” – but not, of course, in human lives. In other words, hundreds of babies that miraculously survived attempted murder in the womb were born alive and left to die. The arbitrary assignment of “birth” as the moment at which – to borrow the ludicrous language of the Criminal Code – the “child becomes a human being” is powerless to impede the murderous purpose of the abortionist’s act. And, predictably, the child marked for death within the womb is not suddenly sacrosanct when a stomach’s wall no longer hides its humanity.

The Russian poet, Anna Akhmatova – writing of Pilate and Macbeth but thinking of Joseph Stalin – hauntingly observed: “We have learned forever/ That blood smells only of blood.” Its unmistakable smell now pervades Canadian Law: nothing conceals its stench, and neither finger bowl nor solvent removes its incriminating mark. The legal toleration of prenatal infanticide has allowed the obscene ancient practice of infant exposure to reappear in the modern world – and without consequences of any kind. We can be sure that this is where barbarism begins; but where it will end, we cannot say.

**‘Homicide’ or not, abortion is a subject that too few Canadian politicians are willing to tackle**

Jonathan Kay *National Post*, Feb 1 2013

In a Jan. 23 [letter](#) to RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson, three Conservative MPs — Maurice Vellacott, Leon Benoit and Wladyslaw Lizon — report “the possibility of numerous breaches of the Criminal Code — to be specific, homicide — in Canada which need to be investigated. These killings appear to have started out as attempted abortions but the babies were born alive.”



Citing Statistics Canada data published on a blog called [Run With Life](#), the letter repeats the blog’s claim that, “From 2000 to 2009 in Canada, there were 491 abortions of 20 weeks gestation and greater, that resulted in live births [a national rate



of about one per week]. This means that the aborted child died after it was born. These abortions are coded [with a Most Responsible Diagnosis (MRDx) designation] of P96.4, or “Termination of pregnancy, affecting fetus and newborn.”

Putting aside loaded terms such as “homicide,” the letter writers are correct when they say that some late-term abortions truly do involve live births. ...

...Of course, no matter what your bioethical views, it is disturbing to imagine any abortion proceeding to the stage that a breathing fetus has been permitted to exit the woman’s body, thereupon to languish upon an operating-room table. But in most cases, it seems, this relatively rare spectacle arises as a result of medical interventions that many Canadians would view as morally defensible. Calling it homicide is therefore a stretch.

But all those caveats having been said, should we blame pro-life advocates for taking any avenue they can to advance their cause — even a long shot such as this one?

The fact is that Canada is the only nation in the Western world without *any* abortion law. It is perfectly legal in Canada to have or perform an abortion — for any reason, or no reason at all — at 20, 25, 30 or 35 weeks gestation. This is a disturbing state of affairs. Yet for some reason, most Canadian politicians and public figures have been intimidated into silence, lest we reawaken a “divisive” debate. Even our own nominally “conservative” Prime Minister apparently wants no part of the issue. And so it is understandable that Messrs. Vellacott, Benoit and Lizon are desperate to find other avenues of political agitation.

Moreover, while the late-term abortions they describe in their letter are rare, it is disturbing that this crucial area of bioethics is not subject to any overarching criminal legislation. And so the only oversight we have comes courtesy of obscure StatsCan reports and medical codebooks.

That is not how an otherwise mature and humane country such as Canada should deal with such a fundamentally important moral issue. However lurid their tactic, Messrs. Vellacott, Benoit and Lizon at least have the courage to tackle an issue that almost all of their colleagues in Ottawa would prefer to leave stillborn.

Canada?

6. Does justice system itself come into disrespect as a consequence of the failure to take action?
7. How does this turn of events square with the points made earlier in the section on social justice issues?

## Pope on social networking: the virtual is real

By NICOLE WINFIELD

Associated Press

[http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/E/EU\\_VATICAN\\_SOCIAL\\_NETWORKS?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2013-01-24-06-03-05](http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/E/EU_VATICAN_SOCIAL_NETWORKS?SITE=AP&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT&CTIME=2013-01-24-06-03-05)

Pope Benedict XVI put church leaders on notice Thursday, saying social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter aren’t a virtual world they can ignore, but rather a very real world they must engage if they want to spread the faith to the next generation.

The 85-year-old Benedict, who tweets in nine languages, used his annual message on social communications to stress the potential of social media for the church as it struggles to keep followers and attract new ones amid religious apathy, competition from other churches and scandals that have driven the faithful away.

...Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli, head of the Vatican’s communications office, made it clear that the “millennial generation” of people born after 1982 use Facebook, Twitter and YouTube far more than their parents as primary sources of information, entertainment and sharing political views and community issues.

“The digital environment is not a parallel or purely virtual world, but is part of the daily experience of many people, especially the young,” Benedict said in his message. “Social networks are the result of human interaction, but for their part they also reshape the dynamics of communication which builds relationships: a considered understanding of this environment is therefore the prerequisite for a significant presence there.”

Benedict himself still writes longhand, but he is a superstar online, with 2.5 million Twitter followers, nearly 11,000 of them following his Latin tweets alone. And under his pontificate, the Holy See has greatly increased its presence online, with YouTube channels, papal apps and an online news portal [HTTP://WWW.NEWS.VA](http://WWW.NEWS.VA) that gathers all Vatican information in one place.

But the digital exposure hasn’t come without risk or criticism: In the days after the Vatican announced that Benedict would respond to questions about faith on his first tweets from his (at) Pontifex handle last month, the Vatican was bombarded with threats of “Twitter bombs” from critics trying to scare the pope away from the online social forum. Celli acknowledged that much of the pope’s message this year repeated exhortations from previous years about the

### Questions

1. Compare the two news articles, one an editorial from a pro-life newspaper and the other an opinion piece appearing in the *National Post*. What do they agree upon and where do the authors differ?
2. Why is this report about 491 live births after attempted abortion not generating outrage among decent Canadians of all political stripes?
3. What should young people do to express their horror about this callous treatment of innocent Canadians?
4. Should the RCMP not be investigating these deaths?
5. What is wrong with the enforcement of the laws in



need for respectful dialogue online, for users to present themselves authentically and to listen, not just preach.

Celli noted, for example, that at a recent Vatican meeting of the world's bishops on spreading the faith, the recommendations for the church's social communications strategy "could have been written 30 years ago."

"That means that he who is intervening doesn't have the perception of what is happening today, in the sphere of social networking," Celli said. "That's a problem for us."

### Questions

1. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages mentioned in this Associated Press report on the Vatican's efforts in the field?
2. What realities did Celli cite for stressing the potential of the new social media?
3. Is social media an effective means to spread the gospel message to the young?
4. From a strictly business point of view there appears to be a real gap between social media use and actual "usefulness" at this time. Should the church nonetheless make use of social media like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube? (See the following article)

<http://www.nevillehobson.com/2013/02/01/closing-the-gap-between-social-media-use-and-usefulness/>

### Father Ted Colleton Scholarship

After an excellent presentation by 59 candidates Niagara Region Right to Life and *The Interim* newspaper are happy to announce the final three winners of the scholarship contest. As usual it was extremely difficult to select three final candidates as the quality of the written submissions together with the personal pro-files of the candidates made them an outstanding group of young people.

The contestants put forth many original ideas in response to the set theme. You will be able to read about them in upcoming issues of *The Interim* later in the spring.

The scholarship participants are active in their schools and in their communities. We thank all of them for taking part and contributing to the pro-life educational dialogue. The three winning applications for this year:

1st place, Darren Pereira (Brebeuf College School, Toronto, ON) 2nd place, Alexandra Jezierski (Kingsville, ON, homeschooled) 3rd place, Katrina Fackelmann (St. Mary CSS, Hamilton, ON)

If your school does not have a subscription to *The Interim* currently, please obtain a subscription. It is only \$45 per year and the school receives 3 copies (perhaps placed in the school library, staff room and guidance or chaplaincy offices?)

## Yahoo! Forum for Teachers

Lastly, we bring to teachers' attention the formation of a Yahoo! group to serve as a forum for pro-life educators to exchange ideas, views, and communicate their thoughts and teaching strategies on key life issues of the day. You are encouraged to join the group and make your own contributions. This is one simple way to expand the culture of life.

The address is:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TheInterimPlus/>

Please tell friends and colleagues about this new link for communicating with like minded educators. There is so much to be done and so few to do it, especially when the few do not realize how numerous they actually are because they are not in contact with one another. Nominate friends and fellow teachers. Send this call out to them.

Also, if you have a resource to share we will gladly post it for others to access.

### How to join The Interim Plus via the group page:

- 1.1. Locate the group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/TheInterimPlus/>).
- 2.2. Click on the Join This Group button on front (home) page, as seen above.
- 3.3. If you are not signed in, you will be asked to enter your Yahoo! ID. If you do not have a Yahoo! ID, you can register by clicking on the Sign Up link.
- 4.4. Set your membership preferences. When you join, you can choose a profile you would like to display to the group, select the email address at which you would like to receive group messages, choose how you receive group messages, and more.











### Questions

1. According to Tuns why did the Democrats opt for making abortion a key plank in their campaign platform? How was this displayed at their convention?
2. Which three groups were they trying to please? Why would those groups welcome a pro-abortion stance?
3. Are the Republican candidates greatly different in their stance on abortion?
4. Is the issue becoming more heated or less important to the outcome of elections in the United States?
  - a) There is another piece of writing in the same October edition of *The Interim* that develops the same theme: the editorial entitled *The Party of Death*. Have students read it online and answer these suggested questions, and from the point of view of America's decline in the world.
  - b) What three points does the editor make?
  - c) Do you agree or disagree with the editor's points



Hawaii candidate for the US House of Representatives Tulsi Gabbard along with serving Democrat Congresswomen



Sandra Fluke



Eva Longoria

