

à propos

Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute

Institut canadien catholique de bioéthique

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Message from the Executive Director, Moira McQueen



So much of life is about waiting. The Advent season reminds us that while we await the coming of the Christ child at Christmas, our whole lives are actually spent waiting for His second coming. One of the gifts of Advent and Christmas is a deepening awareness of the implications of our waiting. Why are we waiting, and for whom? And what should we do while we are waiting, once we recognize the reality of Christ among us, yet still to come? Fr. Cantalamessa of the Papal Household raised a paradox in his homily for the first day of Advent. The Christian "...awaits one who is already come and walks by his side," yet John the Baptist exclaimed: "In your midst there is one whom you do not know!" Christ is always with us, present in the "one whom we do not know", as well as in those we do know.

Bioethics from a Catholic perspective is concerned with true human dignity and care of the body, mind and spirit. Based on the Church's wisdom about the sanctity of life we know we must foster and nourish the realization that every life is important. Every person is an example of the stranger in our midst, the one whom we do not know, but who should be as dear to us as Christ himself. The baby in the manger represents all

humanity offered to us, wrapped in swaddling clothes, waiting to be picked up, loved and cherished.

The shepherds and Magi symbolize our response to the Christ child - they came to worship and they came to pay Him their respects. Worship and respect: the gifts offered to the Christ child are the same gifts that we must offer to others, and must in turn receive from them. Worship in this context does not mean the adoration that we owe to God alone, but is a recognition of Christ in the other, which makes the other inviolable and precious. This is an incredible challenge to those who claim to believe. We can only imagine how difficult it is to decide what promotes the human good, in bioethics and other areas, for those who do not accept that we are all one Bread, one Body.

Advent presents us with gift and challenge. The gift is the coming of Christ: the paradoxical challenge is to recognize Christ in the strangers already among us, and to offer them the same gifts we offer to the baby in the manger. Material gifts are part of any celebration. Advent, though, reveals to us that other forms of gifts can be even more valuable, ensuring that all human beings, at every stage of their lives, will be greeted as warmly as the Christ child. This revelation is greatly needed in bioethics, not only at Christmas but year round.

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PUBLICATION INSERTS
Bioethics Update
Bioethics Matters

MISSION

To promote and protect the dignity of the human person through interdisciplinary ethics research and education in health care and the life sciences.

CCBI Colloquia



HIV/AIDS in Africa

In preparation for the [XVI International Conference on AIDS](#) held in Toronto this past

August, Michael Swan, assistant editor of the Catholic Register, visited Malawi to learn more about the life of people who are affected by HIV and AIDS. In September, Michael was invited by the CCBI to share his experience through his photography journey entitled, "The Human Face of Aids." Michael very movingly engaged the audience with stories and photographs of the faces of the infected and the affected: the infected parent and the affected wife and children; the faces of the missionaries and caregivers and the face of poverty.



Michael Swan

Michael noted that the challenge for us is to show compassion for, and solidarity with those suffering from HIV/AIDS in Africa. Poverty and HIV/AIDS go together and need to be resolved together.

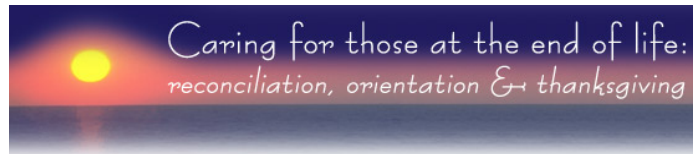
The CCBI invites you to learn more and to support the African Jesuit Aids Network by subscribing to the AJAN Newsletter <http://www.jesuitaids.net/>. The Catholic Register also has a special website report on the Church and Aids: <http://aids.catholicregister.org>



Fr. Leo Walsh, CSB and
Rose Maggisano

Finding Peace at the End of Life: A Catholic Perspective

On December 2, the focus of the colloquium was on various aspects of palliative care. The discussion began with the concept of denial of death. This led into the area of spirituality, the meaning of life, and what it means to have a good death. A model of achieving a good death was presented which included reconciliation, orientation and thanksgiving. The value of using art, music, poetry and prayer was discussed as an aspect of spirituality leading to the sacraments, especially the anointing of the sick and viaticum.



CCBI launches Palliative Care Webpage

On December 8, the CCBI will launch an information webpage to assist health care providers, patients and their families to deal with issues about end of life care. Rose Maggisano has taken the lead on the development and implementation of this comprehensive website. If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact Rose at bioethics.usmc@utoronto.ca. To access the web-

Sustaining our Canadian Health Care System: Economic and Social Implications

At the November 17th bioethics lecture held at the University of St. Michael's College, the CCBI welcomed John Kyle, PhD, an economist and Dr. Claudette Chase, MD, CCFP of the Canadian Physicians for Medicare to share their views and concerns about the sustainability of Canada's health care system. Dr. Kyle expressed the idea that we should re-examine the principle of universality and be

open to alternatives for funding. Dr. Chase noted that Canadians receive the health care they need although perhaps not as quickly as some would like. A first report on the lecture has been published in the December 2006 issue of *Bioethics Matters* (vol.4, no.7).



John Kyle, Moira McQueen and
Fr. Leo Walsh at CCBI 2006
Calgary conference

Third Cardinal Ambrozic Lecture Series 2007 at the University of St. Michael's College, Toronto

The Marginally Competent and Mentally Ill: A Social Tragedy

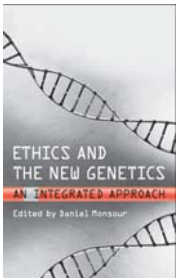


On **March 3, 2007**, Dr. Barry Brown, Professor Emeritus, University of Toronto, will address the problem of how society fails those who are incompetent to care for themselves and may be slowly sliding down a slope toward a state in which they are vulnerable to serious bodily harm. Such individuals are often homeless, finding it difficult to remain in safe living conditions, and in winter, at risk of freezing to death. Yet since they have been assessed as competent to manage their lives, however marginally, they cannot be hospitalized against their will. Hundreds of people are thus left on the streets, detached from reality, uttering mad thoughts, and beyond the help of society

Dr. Brown will explore the question of autonomy and society's obligation to protect those most in need.

This is a free public lecture sponsored by the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute. The lecture held at Alumni Hall, University of St. Michael's College, will begin at 7pm. All are welcome to attend.

Publications



Ethics and the New Genetics

Everyday, new advances are being made in the science of human genetics. Accompanying progress in this, however, are new ethical dilemmas. At a think tank sponsored by the CCBI, an interdisciplinary group of ethicists, geneticists, physicians, lawyers, and theologians gathered in an attempt to apply some features of Bernard Lonergan's notion of functional specialization to ethical debates surrounding genetics.

Pre-release discount forms available on line
(Regular Price \$45.00/Discount Price \$36.00)



The State of Palliative Care in Canada: End of Life Care

Highlights of the second Cardinal Ambrozic Lecture given by the Honourable Sharon Carstairs, P.C. now available on DVD through the CCBI. 17:28 min./\$15 includes shipping.

Available soon from the CCBI

Reflections on the Use of Artificial Nutrition and Hydration

When the issue of artificial nutrition and hydration (ANH) arises, good clinical judgement as well as good moral judgement is needed.

In 2004, following John Paul II's address on Life Sustaining Treatments and the Vegetative State, further ethical questions arose. The CCBI hosted a colloquium later that year to identify some of the issues. This book contains the proceedings of the colloquium including a consensus statement on some moral principles in the Catholic tradition regarding life sustaining treatment.

Past publications (since 2001) available on line at www.utoronto.ca/stmikes/bioethics

- Bioethics Update
- Bioethics Matters
- *à propos*

For additional information on these programmes, publications and future events, please check our website www.utoronto.ca/stmikes/bioethics, call 416-926-2335, or email bioethics.usmc@utoronto.ca

CCBI Conference 2007, St. Mary's University, Halifax, NS

Wellness in Body, Mind and Spirit: Bioethical Dimensions



Registration is now open for the 2007 CCBI conference, being held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, May 23 - 26, 2007. The conference, "Wellness in Body, Mind and Spirit," will focus on

a wide range of mental health issues that affect many Canadians and the health care system. The registration fee is \$275. and includes all lectures and workshops, lecture material and most meals (breakfast, breaks and lunch during the conference, a welcome reception and banquet dinner).

For guests requiring accommodation in Halifax, a block of rooms has been reserved. Single room rates range from \$44.11* for a room with a shared bathroom to \$71.44* for a suite with a private bathroom. To book your accommodation, please contact Wanda Robinson, Saint Mary's University (wanda.robinson@smu.ca) directly.

* 2006 rates subject to change.

Wanted: Abstracts for Workshops

Abstracts are now being accepted for workshop presentations.

Applicants should focus on mental health issues and psychopharmacology, with emphasis on special needs groups, including the elderly. These themes bring many issues into play: competence, autonomy, pharmacology and provide a valuable opportunity for our multidisciplinary audience of bioethicists, health care providers, clergy, lawyers and other professionals to engage in rich discussions about a topic of common interest. The registration fee will be waived for successful candidates. For further information on submitting an abstract, please visit our website www.utoronto.ca/stmikes/bioethics.



Conference Programme Highlights

The Academic Advisory committee is pleased to present the highlights of the 2007 CCBI Conference.

Wednesday May 23

Evening Welcome Reception

Thursday May 24

Canadian Health Care and Issues of Justice for Mental Health

Dr. Nuala Kenny

Falling through the Cracks

Dr. Barry Brown

Mass

Most Rev. Terrence Prendergast,

Archbishop of Halifax

Banquet Dinner Speaker

Dr. Michael Higgins

Mental Health and the Media

Friday May 25

Ethical Issues in Gerontopharmacology

Fr. Noël Simard

Afternoon: *Concurrent workshops on a variety of topics related to bioethics and mental health issues*

Saturday May 26

Non-Treatment Decisions for People with Developmental Disabilities

Dr. William Sullivan

Mental Health from a Psychiatrist's Perspective

Dr. Edward Rzakki

Full Conference details available at www.utoronto.ca/stmikes/bioethics