

2013 Cardinal Ambrozic Lecture

On April 25 Cardinal Thomas Collins delivered the 2013 Cardinal Ambrozic Lecture in Bioethics. Entitled “Evangelizing the Culture,” the lecture acknowledged the blessings of our culture but noted the dangers hidden in our modern social mores.

As the Cardinal emphasized, there is much to admire and celebrate about our current culture; however, he identified several unspoken, erroneous and ultimately destructive assumptions operative in society. Foremost among them is the turn to a subjectivist world view that skews our understanding of conscience and rejects both objective moral norms and objective, permanent commitment. It is a worldview that is highly individualistic and feckless, replacing intellectual rigour with emotional response and forgoing the covenantal foundations that make committed loving relationships possible. As the Cardinal pointed out, we are commanded to love all persons deeply and profoundly day in and day out. Current culture, meanwhile, portrays unconditional love as an emotional reflex when in fact we must engage in discernment in order to judge what this love requires of us.

According to the Cardinal, one way that Catholics can evangelize this individualistic culture is to turn to our belief in a Triune God and adopt a relational understanding of humankind. In other words, believing that we are made in the image and likeness of God, we must realize our calling to live in and build communities of life and love. However, even here we are challenged not to be insular but to face outwards—moving out to the streets, as Pope Francis urges us. As we do this, we must have complete reverence for all people we encounter. Our love for others must be a practical love, perhaps even a sacrificial love. It is a love that must above all be faithful, as Jesus’ love is. And we must reject the idea of conscience as being a “feeling” and understand it instead as our faculty for moral judgment through which we discern what is right, with the goal of conforming our actions to objective moral norms.

In closing, the Cardinal reiterated that we are indeed living in a time of great blessings and that we have many, many things to celebrate. However, we must not simply accept the erroneous assumptions prevalent in our society—assumptions that have the potential to lead us astray and cause great suffering to individuals and to our culture as a whole. Instead, in the Year of Faith, Catholics are called to evangelize the culture by creating true communities of practical love modelled on our Triune God.

Bridget Campion, PhD

For People in the Pews

For People in the Pews (FPIP) is an “everyday bioethics” lecture series designed by the Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute for parishes. Understanding bioethical principles has become increasingly important as science and medicine develop new techniques. Sometimes these raise moral questions that seem to challenge Catholic teaching on the dignity of life.

For more information on FPIP visit ccbi-utoronto.ca/fpip/



Cardinal Thomas Collins.

Photographer: Michael Swan, Catholic Register

Summer
2013



CANADIAN CATHOLIC BIOETHICS INSTITUTE
INSTITUT CANADIEN CATHOLIQUE DE BIOÉTHIQUE

UNIVERSITY OF ST MICHAEL'S COLLEGE
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, greeted by Cardinals Thomas Collins, Marc Ouellet and Jean-Claude Turcotte.

Photographer: Cpl Roxanne Shewchuk, Rideau Hall

Upcoming Events

October 16, 2013
CCBI – Order of Malta
Seminar
7 pm

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Executive Director's Message

Dear Friends and Supporters of CCBI,

As we approach the summer months, we hope that you have time for some peaceful relaxation, enjoying God’s wonderful works of nature with family and friends. In the world of bioethics, many questions arise from human manipulation of nature, whether of the human person through various ways of creating embryos, or of the development of biotech foods and fuels and their effects on human beings, and so on. Some of these manipulations serve life, and others are opposed to foundational Catholic teaching. We will continue to point out what our Church says about these differences, and we ask for your continuing, prayerful support!

For People in the Pews

I was delighted to be invited to Madonna House, Combermere, in January to do some presentations on end-of-life issues. The community there has reached a stage where there are several end-of-life situations, and our sessions reflected this. We discussed how to make moral decisions, informed consent, Catholic teaching on pain management and medication at end of life. The sessions were lively, and, I hope, valuable. My husband and I have always admired Madonna House's way of life, their “Little Mandate” and their way of

living out the Gospel values. We remember with fondness visiting their summer retreat for families several years ago when our children were young, and Catherine Doherty took the time to visit the vacationing families.

I was also delighted to be invited to present our FPIP sessions at St. Silouan’s Orthodox Church in Toronto in January. Orthodox Archpriest Fr. Cyprian Hutcheon led the first session and I led the other three. It was encouraging to see so many people in their twenties and thirties (not our usual demographic these days!), and attendance was excellent for a relatively small congregation. Fr. Roberto was a welcoming host and I loved the way our sessions ended with sung Vespers.

In February, we presented the FPIP four evenings at St. Timothy’s RC Church in Orangeville. Our four sessions there were also well attended, despite the frigid weather. Thanks to Fr. Sean, Mary and Theresa for their excellent advertising of the event locally as well as in their parish.

If you would like to host an FPIP event in your community parish please contact CCBI.

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Shepherds' Trust

I was honoured to speak to some of our retired priests at a Shepherds' Trust meeting held at Blessed Sacrament RC Church on end of life issues, and hope to return soon, perhaps, to speak about advance care planning.

World Day of the Sick

Chaplaincy at the University of St Michael's College and CCBI collaborated on the World Day of the Sick, February 11. I spoke to the students who attend Sunday Liturgy there, and also to a group led by Chaplain Fr. François Mifsud, OP, on some bioethical topics. It is encouraging to find young people who are interested in bioethical issues, and congratulations to Fr. François and Marilyn Elphick, Chaplaincy Director for USMC, for all the work they do for students at St. Mike's, academically and spiritually. I hope we can collaborate again.

Media

CTS TV invited me to do some commentaries on ethical issues that arise on various episodes of The West Wing – abortion, premarriage, the duties of politicians, etc. The segments are used as "interstitials," inserted during re-runs of The West Wing series. It's clear that these life issues never go away, and kudos to CTS for helping to keep them circulating. (Incidentally, my two eldest grandchildren were surprised to see Granny on TV during this type of show!) Neil MacCarthy, Communications Director for the Archdiocese of Toronto, included me on a list of people to speak to the media after Pope Benedict's resignation and before and after the election of Pope Francis. I was delighted to be of use, and was impressed by Salt and Light's fielding a programme just two hours after Pope Francis was elected. Bambi handed me a quick resume of Cardinal Bergoglio as I was running out of the office to go to the studio, because, like nearly everyone else, I was saying: "Cardinal Who?" Well, we soon found out, didn't we!

The Inauguration of Pope Francis

The very next day I received an email from the Governor-General's Office, inviting me to be part of the official Canadian delegation to Rome for the inaugural Mass of Pope Francis. I couldn't quite believe it at first, but was honoured to represent CCBI and all our patrons and supporters, as well as the Theology Faculty and the University of St. Michael's College. The Governor General and his wife led the delegation of parliamentarians with fourteen representatives of different Catholic groups from across Canada. Flying on an Armed Forces' official plane from Ottawa, staying at a lovely hotel in Rome with motorcades to and from the airport (loved that part!) and meeting the Governor-General and his wife all added to the importance of the event. A reception was held at the Canadian College in Rome, attended by Cardinal Ouellet (looking very relaxed!), Cardinal Turcotte and our own Cardinal Collins, as well as by Archbishop Smith and Archbishop LaCroix. This was an historic occasion, addressed by the Governor-General and Minister Jason Kenney. The most exciting part was, naturally, the inauguration itself. We were taken by motorcade to the Vatican, shown to reserved seats in front of St. Peter's and sat in glorious sunshine after two days of heavy rain, waiting for the Mass to begin. The whole Liturgy was wonderful, and yet, in its own way, simple. How fitting! The music was amazing, given the area of the square that had to be covered; the readers from different countries reflected the international, truly catholic, face of the Catholic Church, and the occasion was reverent (despite the size of the crowd), moving, and spiritually memorable. God bless our Pope!



*Moira McQueen, Executive Director, Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute and Betty Anne Brown Davidson, President, Catholic Women's League of Canada
Photographer: S. Gilberte Baril, o.p*

A Critique of the Liverpool Care Pathway

On February 27, Dr. Tony Kerigan gave a detailed and interesting presentation on policies at end-of life that are causing concern for doctors, ethicists, patients and families. Co-sponsored with the Order of Malta, the seminar made us all intensely aware of

the need for good, experienced physicians, capable of assessing developing end stages and with concern for the care and comfort of the patient uppermost in mind.

Cathedral of Christ the King

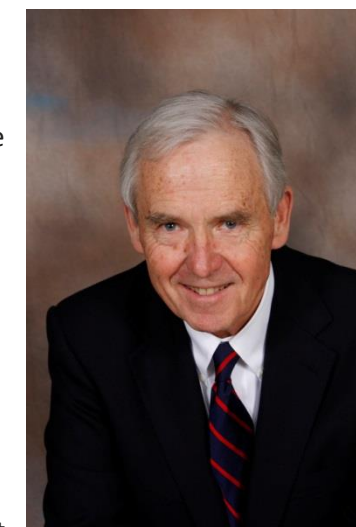
I presented a lecture on current bioethical matters at the Cathedral of Christ the King in Hamilton (my home parish) in February, part of its Year of Faith proceedings. Thanks to Msgr. Edward House for all the advertising he did, and to the members of the CWL for organizing refreshments and for being so supportive.

Radio Teopoli, Conversations in Catholic Bioethics

In January I interviewed Dr. Mary Marrocco, who talked about the work of the Canadian Council of Churches and some of its projects, which she and I are involved in through the CCC Biotechnology Reference Group. Dr. Bridget Campion interviewed Dr. Jim Rusthoven, also a member and former chair of the Biotechnology Reference Group, about the Faith and Genetics Program that group has developed. If your parish would be interested in holding such discussions, please let me know! Please try to listen to Radio Teopoli: they are doing such good work, and the broadcasts Bridget and I have done are available on their website and on ours.

Board Member John McGrath

Congratulations to Mr. John McGrath, for many years Chancellor of the Archdiocese, who was awarded the Papal Honour of Knight Commander, with Star, of the Order of St. Gregory by Pope Benedict in February. It was conferred by Cardinal Collins with all the Toronto bishops present. He and his wife Aileen are long-term and wonderful supporters of CCBI. We are fortunate to have their support and we congratulate John most sincerely on being awarded this great honour.



Symposium and Lecture

On April 25 we had the honour of having Cardinal Collins address us at our annual Cardinal Ambrozic Lecture, which this year was given in honour of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, on its 900th Anniversary. Cardinal Collins gave an inspiring talk on the reasons why Church teaching on bioethics and other serious matters can be relativized by the media, on the dangers of false compassion in these areas, and the need for engagement with media, recognizing that it can also be a force for good in today's world.

This was preceded by an afternoon colloquium co-sponsored by the Order of Malta and also recognizing its 900th anniversary. The presenters were Dr. Rory Fisher, Dr. Bill Sullivan, Mr. Valentine Lovekin, (all members of the Order, Valentine being the Vice-President of the Toronto and Southwest Region) as well as our own CCBI representative, Dr. Bridget Campion, and we plan to publish their papers as well as the contributions of those present.

Moira McQueen, LLB, MDiv, PhD



Valentine Lovekin on "Power of Attorney for Personal Care: balancing private rights and public interest"

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