



**ORGANISME CATHOLIQUE POUR LA VIE ET LA FAMILLE
CATHOLIC ORGANIZATION FOR LIFE AND FAMILY**

For immediate release

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Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

We have reached a crossroad: let us choose life!

Two recent Canadian court decisions have confirmed the inherent dignity of human life and the necessity to continue defending it until its natural end. The Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF) rejoices with all people and groups who have at heart respect for the life of each and every Canadian.

The most recent decision came on October 18, 2013, when the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the earlier decision of the Court of Appeal of Ontario, in the Rasouli case, by ruling that medical doctors must obtain consent from a patient or his or her substitute decision maker before withdrawing life-sustaining treatment that may result in death. A week earlier, on October 10, the British Columbia Court of Appeal upheld Canada's laws prohibiting euthanasia and assisted suicide, in a 2 to 1 decision, by overturning the June 15, 2012, lower court decision of Justice Lynn Smith in the Carter case (which ruled that Canada's assisted suicide law was discriminatory and, thus, unconstitutional).

These two decisions are encouraging for those who believe in the sanctity of human life. But they are only two steps towards the acknowledgement by all of this fundamental and ultimate value. We are very preoccupied by the ongoing debate over Quebec's Bill 52 (An Act Respecting End-of-Life Care). In a way, we have reached a crossroad. We must ask ourselves what sort of society we want to bequeath to our children and our children's children. Let us choose to build a society which *prioritizes* the needs of the weak and vulnerable by giving them our attention, our support and our care.

The hour is extremely serious. This is a question of life and death. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we cannot remain indifferent. We must reach out to our family, parish, social and professional networks to discuss these pressing issues and share our Catholic perspective. Today, the Lord is counting on each one of us, as full-fledged citizens, to defend life by intervening actively in the social debate on euthanasia and assisted suicide.

COLF calls on Canadians from coast to coast to become more informed about these issues by consulting the following resources:

- Catholic Organization for Life and Family (www.colf.ca)
- Euthanasia Prevention Coalition (www.epcc.ca)
- Living with Dignity (www.vivredignite.com/en/welcome.html)
- Physicians Alliance for the Total Refusal of Euthanasia (www.totalrefusal.blogspot.ca/p/the-physicians-alliance.html).

As Pope Francis recently reminded us all: “The future of a people is in the elderly and in the children. A people that does not care for their elderly and their children does not have a future, because it will not have a memory and will not have a promise!”

Life is God’s to give *and to take*.

The Catholic Organization for Life and Family is cosponsored by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus. Its mission is to promote the human life and dignity, and the essential role of the family.

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