

# LifeLines

*Life Issues Bulletin February 2018*

“To serve human life is to serve God. All life, from life in the mother’s womb to that of the elderly, the suffering and the sick, and to that of the troublesome and even repellent, is to be welcomed, loved and helped.”

(Pope Francis, January 1, 2018, New Year homily)



*LifeLines* will appear four times a year, to remind us of this message of love for life. We are responsible to God to care for every life, from birth to natural death, and for the weak and helpless especially.

## **Saved by a Song**

A few months ago, some people from Holy Family Church in St. Albert, Alberta, were praying across the street from the abortion clinic. Inspired to start singing that early morning, they soon noticed a woman looking at them from across the street. She came over to them and said she was irresistibly drawn by their singing, was pregnant and desperate, and going for an abortion.

They talked, urged her to consider life for her child, and offered help. They kept in touch. Months later, a happy mother and newborn came to Holy Family Church, to receive a generous shower of love and gifts.

## **On the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering:**

Pope St. John Paul II wrote a profound Apostolic Letter, on the topic which would make excellent Great Fast reading:

**Access this document online at:**

[https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_letters/1984/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_11021984\\_salvifici-doloris.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1984/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_11021984_salvifici-doloris.html)

## **Dying naturally**

“Dying naturally allows terminal patients time for resolution and growth,” declares Dr. Luke Savage, family physician in Three Hills, Alberta. “We don’t hear these stories in the news. We don’t hear of the truly brave people who want something more than death, who refuse to lose hope.”

His patient, Ann, a few years into retirement, was quite healthy. But earlier this spring, tests showed advanced metastatic ovarian cancer. Surgery was not an option. Chemo would only give a few extra months plus unwanted side effects. Ann did not turn to despair, fear or defiance and seek to end it all. Rather, she turned to family, friends and faith in God.

**May he enlighten the eyes of your mind  
so that you can see what hope his call holds for you,  
what rich glories he has promised  
that the saints will inherit... Eph 1:18**

Ann explains, “We have so much excellent help available to control symptoms. I do not fear that I will experience uncontrollable pain or suffering. To me, emotional pain is a powerful amplifier of physical pain. I am finding peace. I am not desperate to prolong life. To die naturally in the presence of my family is my hope.”



Ann cares deeply for the living and the legacy she leaves them. “My journey with terminal cancer has resulted in deepening some of my relationships, with steps toward reconciliation taken by a family member who has been estranged for a number of years. If I chose euthanasia, this resolution and growth would not have been available to the ones who will live on after I have died.”

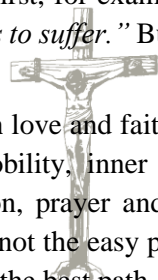
Ann is learning to pass on her wisdom to her children and grandchildren. She is learning to enjoy each day as it comes. One day she looked at her husband and said: “I can walk this journey ahead, as long as you’ll walk with me.” This, truly, is what a good death looks like.

(Dr. Luke Savage is a member of Canadian Physicians for Life. A longer version of this article first appeared in the Edmonton Journal)

## ***Seek Sound Advice before Making a Life and Death Decision***

**Be wise** and discerning in what you read or overhear in a conversation or see in the media. Deceptive, irreligious ideas might sound quite acceptable at first, for example; “Euthanasia is o.k. God doesn’t want us to suffer.” But is that true? Consider Jesus on the cross!

Suffering, when accepted, and united in love and faith to Christ, can actually work towards nobility, inner and relational healing, holiness, compassion, prayer and an intimate relationship with God. This is not the easy path. However, uniting ourselves to Christ is the best path.



### **From the Fathers of the Church:**

The cross is the door to mysteries. Through this door the intellect makes entrance in to the knowledge of heavenly mysteries. The knowledge of the cross is concealed in the sufferings of the cross. And the more our participation in its sufferings, the greater the perception we gain through the cross. For, as the Apostle says, ‘As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.’  
The Ascetical Homilies of St. Isaac of Syria

### **RESOURCES**

#### **Questions about continuing or ending a pregnancy? A warm voice on the line at:**

- Saskatoon Pregnancy Options Center;  
<http://www.saskatoonpregnancy.com/contact.php>;  
(Call)306.665.7550 or (text) 306.361.2760
- Informed Choices Pregnancy Center Moose Jaw,  
<http://www.icpcmoosejaw.ca/>; 306.690.8462
- Options Pregnancy Center Resources and Lifestyle Coaching Inc., Regina,  
<http://www.reginapregnancy.com/> 306-757-3344

#### **Concerns about end of life care or pressures to accept euthanasia or assisted suicide?**

- See a priest for information about the Church’s guidance and wisdom in life and death matters.
- Euthanasia Prevention Coalition: <http://www.epcc.ca>  
1-877-439-3348
- Call Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan;  
[catholichealth@chassk.ca](mailto:catholichealth@chassk.ca); 306-955.2427

#### **Troubled by a previous abortion - yours or another’s?**

- See a parish priest and/or contact any of the above Pregnancy Centers
- Fountain of Hope; <http://fountainofhopeonline.org/>
- Rachel’s Vineyard; <http://www.rachelsvineyard.org/>
- Priest for Life—After Abortion;  
<http://www.priestsforlife.org/afterabortion/>



**Make time for Life:** Consider hosting a **Dying Healed Seminar** in your parish. The purpose of this program is to create lay people confident in their ability to accompany those who suffer, bringing love, hope and a sense of belonging to counter the ‘culture of death’. Please contact for more information: Deb Larmour at [uwitness2family@skeparchy.org](mailto:uwitness2family@skeparchy.org)

**FOR LENT - What can I give up for the sick, the dying, for the desperate and lonely, for the poor and suicidal? What prayers, sacrifices, what service can I offer this Lent to give life and hope to someone? “Lord, show me...”**  
**Together we can build up a treasure house of loving deeds to save souls.**

#### **Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen’s Prayer**

**Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I love you very much. I beg you to spare the life of (..... give the child a name) the unborn baby that I have spiritually adopted who is in danger of abortion, who has so much joy and love to give! (Pray this for nine months)**

*LifeLines* originates with Life Associates, Edmonton, Alberta.  
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