

Social Justice Communique

April 2, 2024

2023-2025/04

I hope that all of you had a wonderful Lenten season of renewal and reflection and that you celebrated a lovely Easter with your family.

Palliative Care

National Chairperson of Social Justice, Glenda Carson reported in her last communique on an upcoming International Interfaith Symposium on Palliative Care. The exciting event is being partially hosted by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Pontifical Academy for Life in Toronto from May 21 – 23, 2024 in Toronto. “It will unite participants from various disciplines and experts in various specialties to build a strong advocacy network for effective and comprehensive palliative and end-of-life care.” Palliative care is essential in allowing patients to receive a dignified alternative to medical assistance in dying. Canada faces many challenges in implementing wide-spread palliative care services. Included in these challenges are: access to adequate services across different health regions, lack of trained professionals, lack of coordination between the various bodies offering services, lack of public awareness and inadequate funding and resources. The symposium’s goal is to face these challenges head on and to build a network of professionals who can develop and highlight palliative care resources. Glenda has further requested that parish councils consider donating to this event; a cheque can be sent directly to the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2500 Promenade Done Reid, Ottawa, ON, K1H 2J2. Make note that the donation is to be applied as “palliative care symposium sponsorship.” Currently, my family is experiencing the loss of a close family member and I am seeing first hand the need for more palliative care. Please offer prayers for the success of the upcoming conference.

March For Life

The March for Life at the Victoria Legislative Assembly will be held on Thursday, May 9th, 2024. Please consider joining with thousands of others across Canada who will be peacefully promoting Life. The March will begin at Centennial Square at 1:45 PM and processes down Government Street to the BC Legislature. Once there, participants will gather in front to pray and listen to a roster of speakers who will address Life issues. I plan to attend to represent the Provincial Catholic Women’s League executive and should have the CWL banner unfurled and very visible. I ask any CWL members who plan on attending to join in the group behind our banner. This year’s theme is “I will never forget you.” Please check out the website for more information: <https://m4lvictoria.ca/>.

Human Trafficking

On February 29th, 2024 the Standing Committee on the Status of Women released their report: “ACT NOW: PREVENTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN, GIRLS AND

GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE IN CANADA.” The committee had heard from 55 witnesses and received 57 written submissions between March 20th and May 18th, 2023. The report acknowledges that human trafficking does occur in Canada and that “women, girls and gender diverse individuals are disproportionately affected by these crimes.” The study was undertaken to improve Canada’s approach to addressing and preventing this crime, as well as improving support for victims and survivors. One of the flaws in the report, as outlined by VCASE (Vancouver Collective Against Sexual Exploitation) is that “it appears to legitimize prostitution while also failing to recognize that it is illegal to purchase sex in Canada.” Our current law, the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act is very clear that “exploitation is inherent in prostitution.” Speaking on behalf of VCASE in a press release, Trish Baptie noted: “Logically then, the selling of sex can never be truly consensual when the prostituted person is being exploited.” The report recommends a differentiation between “consensual sex-work, sex trafficking and sexual exploitation of minors;” therefore legitimizing the commoditization of the human person. Justice Robet Goldstein of the Ontario Superior Court declared: “there is a clear link between sex work and human trafficking. In fact, there is a considerable body of evidence that many sex workers are manipulated or coerced into sex work or trafficked while in it.” I have included the links to VCASE’s press release and the full committee report; please educate yourself further and consider writing your MP to support Canada’s existing law.

<https://www.vcase.ca/news-and-events>

<https://www.ourcommons.ca/documentviewer/en/44-1/FEWO/report-10>

*“I’m convinced of this: good done anywhere is good done everywhere.”
Dr. Maya Angelou*

Blessings, Angelina Stiglich