

# In Defence of Life

## Edmonton Prolife's Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 2

'educating for life'

Summer 2004

### The humanity of the Unborn

**Corry Morcos**

President of Edmonton Prolife

August is upon us and the *Klondike Days Information Booth* has been put to bed for another year. Once again, the booth provided Edmonton Prolife with a wonderful opportunity to share with ordinary folk about the dignity of all persons! The display spoke to both the rights of the unborn, as well as the right of women to real choice. As one of the posters read, "Women deserve better than abortion."

Before proceeding, let me introduce myself. My name is Corry Morcos and it was an honour to have been elected president of Edmonton Prolife in May of this year. I have been involved in the pro-life, pro-family work for several years. As with all good endeavors, it is teamwork that turns ideas into projects. The upcoming year will depend a lot on the support of our members and friends. We would like to set up information booths at churches, schools and community events throughout the greater Edmonton area. If you have an idea or would like to extend to us an invitation to your community, church, or school, please, give us a call.

We have learned during the last federal election that the abortion issue is very much alive, that it remains for many the *social justice/human rights issue* that will not go away. Speaking up for the defenceless (when the defenceless are in our midst) has never been politically correct. The mainstream media is appalled by our insistence on speaking to an issue that they have summarily dismissed as *passee*. Edmonton Prolife encourages its supporters to not only educate public themselves about life issues, but to educate public officials (political or otherwise) about the same

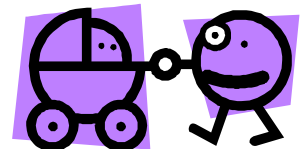
On the horizon, provincial, municipal and school board elections loom. In all areas make your voice heard. MLAs are going to make decisions regarding funding or defunding medical procedures, (among them abortion). We stand with you and count on you to challenge the status quo of government funded abortion on demand at all stages of pregnancy. Challenge your local school trustee candidates as to how they will promote pro-life, pro-family values in your children or grandchildren's schools.

Eileen, our newsletter editor, has been combing life issue websites and in this issue of *In Defence of Life* she features a couple excellent sites that focus on the wonder of the unborn. She also has reprinted a beautiful inspiring letter from a mother who has twice faced the prenatal diagnosis of very disabled babies. Somehow, with news out of the Britain of even more spectacular ultra-sound photographs of the unborn child, the theme of this issue of our newsletter is a celebration of the humanity of the unborn.

I close by asking you to please take note of upcoming events, in particular the Life Principles pro-life youth conference in Drayton Valley. And of course, our *Love-them-both Walk-a-thon* is just around the corner. This is our big fundraiser for the year and we ask again for your support.

Please let us know if you have knowledge of local happenings regarding sanctity of life, which includes end of life issues, so we can share them. We are called to serve, and be faithful and obedient to witness to God's love for all life. I am committed to speak out for the right to life anytime,

Corry Morcos



#### Inside this Issue

1 – President's Message

2 – Walkathon, Calendar of Events, EPL Board

3 – Life Principles Youth Conference at Drayton Valley

4 – Life News, [www.edmontonprolife.org](http://www.edmontonprolife.org)

5 – Fetal Development, [www.justthefacts.org](http://www.justthefacts.org)

6 – *An Open Letter* Teresa Streckfuss, [www.benotafraid.net](http://www.benotafraid.net)

7 - *Why Carry a Dying Child?* Fr. Frank Pavone, Elections

8 – Membership Form

# 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Love Them Both Walk-A-Thon

## Honourary Chair: Graham Hicks of the *Edmonton Sun*

Registration at 8:30 am

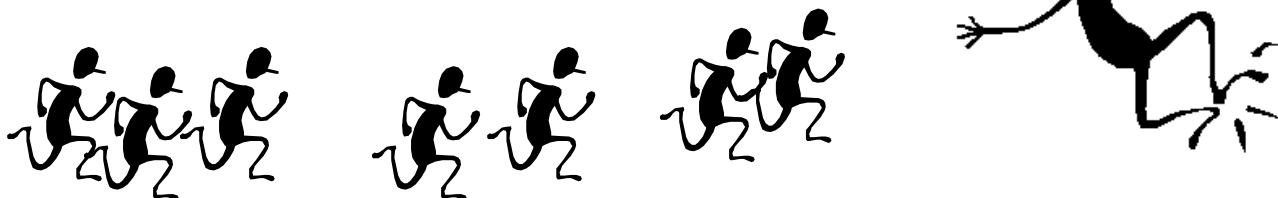
Launching of the walk at 9:00 am

Saturday, September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Rundle Family Center – 2909 113 Ave, Rundle Park, Edmonton

Water will be supplied along the route.

Barbecue lunch to follow.



We're looking forward to seeing you there. If you can't make it, you can still sponsor a walker. Call the office to sponsor our Honourary Chair, Graham Hicks.

### Upcoming Events

- **September 18, 2004 - Love Them Both Walkathon 2004.** Rundle Park. Mark your calendars! See above and insert for more information.
- **September 25, 2004 - Euthanasia Symposium** - Plaza 500 Hotel, Vancouver. The Euthanasia Symposium will focus on strategy in response to the Evelyn Martens court case, which begins on September 20th. Evelyn Martens has raised more than \$100,000 to take her case to the Supreme Court of Canada. She hopes to overturn section 241 of the criminal code that prohibits assisted suicide. Featuring Wesley Smith, Professor Ian Dowbiggan, and others. \$35 per person, including lunch. Hosted by the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition.
- **October 3, 2004 – Sunday – Life Chain.** Phone office for more details.
- **October 12, 2004 – Tuesday – 6:30 PM Fundraiser Dinner for Maria Bizecki** – See Page 4 for details. Tickets: \$50. Tax Receipt for \$30. Call John MacDonald at 469-2323 to purchase tickets.
- **October 14-16, 2004 – National Pro-Life Conference: “Alive and Loving It”**, hosted by League for Life in Manitoba to be held Winnipeg downtown at the Delta Hotel. Call (204) 638-6013 for more information.
- **October 30, 2004 – Youth Conference: *What's Life all About?*** Drayton Valley. Guest speaker, Natalie Hudson of *Toronto Right-to-Life*. Speaking on the *Life Principles*. See opposite page for more details.

For information on any of the above events, call the Edmonton Prolife office at 425-1637 or email us at [edmpl@interbaun.com](mailto:edmpl@interbaun.com)

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Editor: Eileen Rebstock

EPL Board: President: Corrie Morcos, Vice-President: Denise Fedoruk, Treasurer: Glen Woolger, Recording Secretary: Anne Wansink, Past President: Paula Rebstock, Anita Greenways

Office Manager: Karen Richert

New board members welcomed. Meetings first Tuesday of each month at EPL office. All EPL members welcome to attend.



You know how we've been talking a lot *In Defence of Life* about the Life Principles? Well, on October 30 in Drayton Valley, Natalie Hudson, of Toronto Right to Life, is presenting the Life Principles to the annual Drayton Valley Youth for Life conference. Edmonton Prolife is renting a bus and heading out there for the day. So call Karen at the office at 425-1637 to reserve your seat. **If you walk and get sponsors in the Love Them Both Walk-a-Thon, Edmonton Prolife will pay your conference fees.**

Here's an overview of the Life Principles from their website: [www.lifeprinciples.net](http://www.lifeprinciples.net)

"The Life Principles curriculum was created in 1993 when Robert J. Spitzer, S.J., Ph.D., recognized that something integral to the message of a pro-life philosophy was missing. Now the President of Gonzaga University (and a world renowned lecturer in leadership, philosophy, physics, and spirituality), Fr. Spitzer goes to the root of our culture's moral slumber. He recognizes that modern man is not intentionally withdrawing from the values and virtues traditionally defended, but is suffering from a severe malaise brought on by an identity crisis of the worst kind.

Our message recognizes that America has become increasingly materialistic not only in its pursuit of happiness, but also in its definition of what constitutes "reality." This narrow world view has contributed to an incomplete notion of what it means to be a human person, affecting the way our culture views terms like happiness, success, quality of life, love, suffering, freedom, and the common good. Attacks against human life in the form of abortion and euthanasia occur typically as a response to emptiness. An emptiness that is produced by a culture that has been ineffective in supporting and promoting a deeper level of meaning and purpose in life.

Life Principles aims to build up a culture of life. Each human heart must be acquainted with the nature of his or her own dignity, destiny, and ultimate desire for unconditional love. Our message is categorized into four topics (happiness, personhood, beginning of life issues and end of life issues)."

**The one-day conference will be held on Saturday, October 30, 2004 in St. Anthony's School in Drayton Valley, Alberta, beginning at 9:00 am and ending at 4:30 pm.**

**CONFERENCE FEES INCLUDE:**

2 snacks and lunch

REGISTRATIONS RECEIVED BY OCT. 14/04 are:

- Students \$20
  - Chaperones \$10
  - Adults not Chaperoning \$25
  - Add \$5.00 for each person registered after Oct. 15/04
- Call 780-542-4085 for more info about the conference itself.

Call Karen at the Edmonton Prolife office at 425-1637 to reserve a seat on the bus.

Check out [www.lifeprinciples.net](http://www.lifeprinciples.net) or call Edmonton Prolife for more information about the Life Principles.



## Dead and Decomposing Child Sent to Mother by Courier in a Cardboard Box (files from lifesite.net)

Zeb Kenequanash, the Chief of North Caribou Lake First Nation has demanded a police investigation into the actions of a hospital in Thunder Bay when a mother in his community, after a miscarriage, received the decomposing body of her child in a cardboard box. "The mother went hysterical after she found out the unborn child came through the mail," Chief Kenequanash said.

The mother was medevaced to Sioux Lookout hospital but lost her child. When the family requested the remains, the hospital placed the child's body in a cardboard box, labeled it "diagnostic specimen, room temperature," and sent it by Purolator to the wrong address. When it arrived in Caribou Lake, it sat in the post office for six days. By the time the mother received the box, the body had decayed. She had no idea what was in the box when she opened it.

If you saw the TV coverage of this story, you probably remember the residents of this Northern reserve protesting this callous treatment with signs such as, "It's still a baby!" While this family's child was referred to in the media as "fetal remains," the Assembly of First Nations raised \$3,000 to pay for a proper burial for the child. In a time when human life is so devalued that the bodies of the unborn are casually disposed of, it was encouraging to see ordinary people standing up for the dignity of each human person.

### Bizecki Fundraiser Dinner

Maria Bizecki, a Calgary pharmacist, was suspended from her job in August 2000 for her refusal to dispense abortifacient contraceptives to a customer. Her employers, Calgary Co-Op, refused to recognize her right to conscientious objection.

At last, in late 2003, Bizecki reached an agreement with her employer and the Alberta College of Pharmacists allowing her to refuse to dispense abortifacient drugs and contraceptives which would be a violation of her morals. This is a wonderful victory for Bizecki, but sixteen months of suspension without pay and various substantial legal expenses add up.

To defray these costs, a fundraiser dinner is being held on October 12 for Maria Bizecki. Guest speakers will be Maria Bizecki, Archbishop Thomas Collins, and Senator Anne Cools. Tickets are \$50 with a tax receipt for \$30. Call John Macdonald at 469-2323 to purchase tickets or for more information.



## Bush Administration Continues to Deny Funding to United Nations Arm over Forced Abortion (LifeSiteNews.com)

LifeSiteNews.com has been informed that the Bush Administration announced today that the United Nations Population Fund's support for the coercive Chinese forced abortion and involuntary sterilization program makes it ineligible for United States funding. UNFPA will thus not receive any federal funding for the Fiscal Year 2004.

Congressman Chris Smith, Vice Chairman of the House Committee on International Relations and a leading human rights advocate in Congress commented on the decision stating, "The UNFPA continues to be guilty of shamelessly supporting and whitewashing terrible crimes against humanity, and the United States will have no part in subsidizing them. In refusing to fund the UNFPA, President Bush and our country have taken the side of the oppressed and have refused to cooperate with the oppressor. The United States will not fund the brutal and oppressive Chinese government's one-child-per-couple policy."

In some of the strongest criticism the UNFPA has received Congressman Smith said, "If UNFPA lobbied the Chinese government to stop forced abortion as aggressively as they lobby the United States to overturn human rights policy, there would be less suffering in China right now . . . It is long past time for the UNFPA to sever its ties with China's one-child-per-couple family planning program that relies on forced abortion, involuntary sterilization and heavy economic penalties on women to achieve its results."

[www.edmontonprolife.org](http://www.edmontonprolife.org)

Our website continues to grow as a resource for pro-lifers in the Greater Edmonton Area. Visiting the site, you'll find a calendar of events, past newsletters, pro-life resources, and information about crisis pregnancy aid and post-abortion counseling.



A new section has been added under Resources called Online Resources, which features pro-life essays, articles, and information available on the web. If you're writing a paper, making a speech, or taking part in a debate about life issues such

as cloning, euthanasia, stem cell research, and abortion? Edmonton Prolife has all the resources you need to make your project a success.

## Britain takes another look at abortion.

By Paulinus Barnes, Catholic News Service

British Church and pro-life leaders have welcomed British lawmakers' calls to review the country's abortion laws.

Calls to review the legislation came after publication of pictures of fetuses as young as 12 weeks stretching and kicking in the womb. The photos were produced by a new type of ultrasound scanning that offered an unprecedented look into the world of unborn babies.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair told Parliament July 7 that if scientific evidence relating to the viability of fetuses had changed then Parliament should re-examine the matter.

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor of Westminster said that the new fetus photos "rightly shocked people into rethinking the morality of the present law... I am very glad the prime minister has given his support to a review," he said in a July 8 statement.

Other lawmakers also called for a review of the abortion laws. David Steel, the senior British politician who pioneered the 1967 legislation allowing abortions in Britain, called for a 12-week time limit for legal abortions. Current British law allows for abortions up to 24 weeks.

Steel said woman should be able to choose termination up to three months into the pregnancy with relative ease, but after that point abortion should only be allowed for medical reasons.

Archbishop Peter Smith of Cardiff, who chairs the bishops' committee on bioethics, said "advancements in fetal medicine reveal more and more clearly the humanity of the unborn child... Faced with this evidence, it is not surprising that so many people now call for a change in the abortion law," he said.

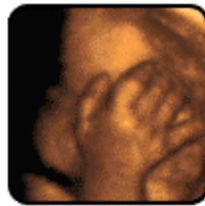
Jack Scarisbrick, chairman of the pro-life organization Life, said he would welcome "any measure that will reduce the destruction of unborn children." But Scarisbrick said calls are also arising to make earlier abortions more easily obtainable. "If this is the event outcome then it is something to be feared."



11 weeks



28 weeks



32 weeks

## www.justthefacts.org

Reviewed by Eileen Rebstock

There are many internet sites devoted to educating the public about fetal development and pre-natal life, but by far the best is [www.justthefacts.org](http://www.justthefacts.org). 'Just the Facts' originated as an educational program for the Irish schools, but has expanded into an educational website for the whole world. The website itself is very professional looking, easy to navigate, and chock full of interesting information and beautiful pictures. The site uses Flash animation, but if you don't have Flash or your computer's slow, there's also an HTML version of the site.



The site is divided into several sections. One: *The Amazing Facts* is a beautiful pictorial overview of how life begins and grows in the womb.

*Your first 9 months* follows the development of the child week by week until birth in photographs and text.

*When life begins* provides quotes from famous scientists that life begins at conception.

*Foetal surgery* explores this growing new field and tells the stories of tiny unborn patients.

In *Foetal pain*, you can learn about the unborn's nervous system and how it can feel pain.

In *Baby's heartbeat*, you can listen to the heartbeat of an unborn baby at 28 days, 7 weeks, and 11 weeks.

*Video clips* has nine different short video clips of the developing child at different stages of the pregnancy.

*Pregnancy* is a section for expecting mothers, in which a mother can calculate her due date and create at an individualized calendar of her pregnancy.

There's also a *Quiz* to test your knowledge of fetal development.

This site is a wonderful resource for educators and students alike. A teacher or parent can easily use the site as a presentation on fetal development and pre-natal life and it provides wonderful resources for the student doing a paper or a project.

Teachers, if you'd like Edmonton ProLife to present to your class on fetal development, call Karen at the office at 425-1637. Our presentation includes a video on fetal development, models of the unborn at various stages of the pregnancy, and several full-colour pamphlets for students to take home.

## www.BeNotAfraid.Net

**Benotafraid.net is an online outreach to parents who have received a poor or difficult prenatal diagnosis. The family stories, articles, and links within the site are presented as a resource for those who may have been asked to choose between terminating a pregnancy or continuing on despite the diagnosis. The benotafraid.net families faced the same decision and chose not to terminate. By sharing their experiences, they hope to offer encouragement to those who may be afraid to continue on.**

**One woman with a story to share is Teresa Streckfuss of Australia, who wrote this letter to her friends after her unborn child was diagnosed with the terminal condition of anencephaly.**

Many of you may have wondered, "What's the point?"... or perhaps pitied us for 'having' to continue carrying a child who is not going to live for long... I understand these thoughts, because when my sister was carrying Thomas Walter (who had been diagnosed with anencephaly at 18 weeks and lived for 17 ½ hours after birth) I really didn't properly comprehend the whole situation. I knew it was the 'right' thing to do. I didn't question that I would have no other option if the same thing ever happened to me (although I knew it never would!) But I thought how awful it was to know for over four months that the child you are carrying is unable to live outside your womb.

Once he was born, I was able to hold my nephew and see him finally as a real person - a precious unique creation - I began to realise that there was a lot more to it than mere 'ethics'. When, much to my disbelief, my own baby, Benedict, was diagnosed with this same condition four years later - I was finally able to grasp it, although it has taken me a long time to be able to put my thoughts into words. It is only since Charlotte's diagnosis that I have found words that almost convey my feelings.



**Benedict Streckfuss**

Some people think we carried Benedict and Charlotte to term because we don't agree with abortion, because we are Catholic, or perhaps because our nephew was carried to term after a fatal diagnosis. While these factors probably all played a part in our immediate refusal of the option to 'terminate', this is not what it's all about! It's about love! It's about my baby! It's not about some tragic, fatal medical condition - it's about my child.

We do not possess more strength than other people. It's not because we can cope where others wouldn't. There is no way to avoid the sad fact that she cannot live long after birth with this condition, but causing Charlotte to die earlier will not stop this happening. Causing her to die earlier will only take from us the beautiful experience of knowing and loving her.

The tragedy is not the fact that we know our baby will die. The tragedy is that our baby will die. It is not nice to know for months beforehand, but it gives us a chance to appreciate a life so brief, and not to miss a moment.

The value of Thomas Walter, Benedict and Charlotte cannot be measured by the length of their lives - we don't apply this yardstick to adults, so why should we to babies? A baby is not a possession, an accessory to acquire. A baby is a gift, a new entity, a precious, individual soul loved by God. We are created for a purpose, there is a reason for our being here. Even if that reason is unclear to us most of the time, we are constantly affecting other people in our families, communities etc. Who knows what purpose can be fulfilled in 9 months and one day? I don't know, but God does. I do know that Benedict left a lasting impression on our family, he made us slow down, savour life, and treasure our other children even more. He made us realise that we cannot control or predict what will happen in the future, he made us rely on God. And how often are we given the opportunity to really give another person true unconditional love? Love that truly expects no return? It is a blessing to experience that kind of pure love!

So don't pity us for carrying a child we know will die. Carrying this beautiful person is an honour. Grieve for the fact that our baby will die. We wouldn't wish away the time we had with Benedict, and also this time we are now experiencing with Charlotte, just to save us the pain of losing them. I've always thought of it like this; if your 3 year old was diagnosed with untreatable, fatal cancer and had only 4 months to live; would you prefer the doctor kill your child straight away so that you didn't have to wait for his/her impending death? Or would you prefer to spend as much time as you could with your child and love him/her for as long as you had left?

Someone asked us after Benedict died, "Was it worth it?" Oh, YES! For the chance to hold him, and see him, and love him before letting him go ... For the chance for our children to see that we would never stop loving them, regardless of their imperfections? For the chance to give him everything we could? Oh, YES! Love your children, and remember that they each have their own unique mission. Children are always and only a blessing from God - even if they don't stay very long

**Charlotte Mary was delivered by cesarean section June, 21st, 2004. She lived for 5 days, and died on the same day as her brother, Benedict.**



Mark and Teresa Streckfuss with Charlotte

### **Why Carry A Dying Child? Fr. Frank Pavone**

The diagnosis that an unborn child has a life-threatening disease or anomaly is a particularly heavy cross for a family to bear. The hopes and dreams that accompany a pregnancy are thrown into chaos, and the joy of the anticipation of the child's birth becomes intense anxiety. But there is one factor that does not change: the love which the family-and the rest of us-can give to that child.

Some wonder why a baby who will die shortly should even be brought to term. But are we not all to die shortly? How are we to evaluate what is long and what is short when we compare life to eternity? Nobody knows how long he or she is to live, nor do we measure the love we give based on the length of life.

Why should a baby who will die shortly be brought to term? Because we love that child for as long as that child lives, whether life be measured in decades or minutes. Why should we be there for anyone who is suffering? Why should we share in their pain? Why should we stay up all night for a sick toddler? Why should we wait by the bed of a loved one in the hospital? Why should we accept death for anyone, including ourselves?

The alternative to accepting death is to try to control it by giving ourselves the authority to take life before life will make too many demands on us. Hence we have abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia. Just take control. Don't let life hit you too hard. Eliminate the suffering by eliminating the person.

The late Terence Cardinal Cooke wrote a beautiful letter for Respect Life Sunday in 1983. Its eloquence was enhanced by the fact that he was dying of cancer as he wrote it, and died two days before it was read in all the parishes of the Archdiocese of New York. He wrote, "The 'gift of life,' God's special gift, is no less beautiful when it is accompanied by illness or weakness, hunger or poverty, mental or physical handicaps, loneliness or old age. Indeed, at these times, human life gains extra splendor as it requires our special care, concern and reverence."

His words are true no matter how old or young we are. Love means welcome-that is, I open my heart to you as you are -- not wanting-that is, you must meet my needs and expectations.

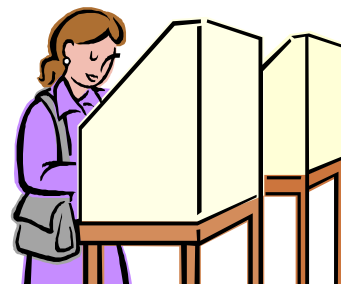
**These are two of the many inspiring stories at [www.benotafraid.net](http://www.benotafraid.net). The site also offers resources on many different disorders that one's unborn child might be diagnosed with, and links to different organizations that will give support and/or further information to parents expecting a baby with a serious illness.**

### **School Board Elections**

Fall is coming and with it the school board trustees' elections. The turnout for the municipal elections, of which the board elections are a part, is usually quite low, and school board trustees don't seem too important to many people. They are, however, important in that they make many important decisions that will influence children's education. Whether schools are open to pro-life presentations, whether there is educational freedom for alternative schools to teach chastity, these are some of the issues that a trustee can impact.

Find out where the candidates in your area stand on these issues. Ask them questions whether in person at a forum, or by email or post. Remember to be neutral in your wording, so that they don't simply give you the answer they believe you want to hear.

Speak up and be heard!



## Edmonton Prolife: Working With Others for Life

**Life Canada** - Edmonton Prolife is an Associate Member of Life Canada, the national Pro-Life educational group. The object of Life Canada is the establishment and operation of a national association of local and provincial educational pro-life groups across Canada. In co-ordination with local groups, they seek to foster and promote public understanding and knowledge of life issues. *Life Canada News* is published six times a year. To subscribe to *Life Canada News* or to read back issues, go to [www.lifecanada.org](http://www.lifecanada.org)

**Alberta Pro-Life** - Edmonton Prolife is affiliated with Alberta Pro-Life, the provincial pro-life umbrella group. A portion of your membership fee goes to support their work with local and national groups to effect change in our society. *The Rose* is published four times a year. To read *The Rose* online, go to [www.albertaprolife.com](http://www.albertaprolife.com)



### We need your help.... time, talent treasure

On behalf of the board of Edmonton Prolife, I ask that you please help us promote respect for all human persons, regardless of age, or ability. Edmonton Prolife's work is ongoing and so are our needs. All help is appreciated. All donations are tax-deductible. Again, please consider becoming a monthly donor.

Thank you, Corry



Clip out and send to Edmonton Prolife, 212, 11125-107 Ave, Edmonton, AB T5H 0X9

*Yes, I would like to help Edmonton Prolife in their work in defence of life.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Membership Fee (\$20) \_\_\_\_\_

Donation \_\_\_\_\_

Total Payment Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Options \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque

Visa

MasterCard

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Cheques payable to *Edmonton Prolife*

#### Join now for easy monthly giving

Monthly giving is an easy way to spread your generosity out over the year and provide a stable base of funding for Edmonton Prolife programs. Your annual membership fee will be covered by the monthly donation.

I authorize Edmonton Prolife to withdraw \$\_\_\_\_\_ (minimum \$5) from my bank account on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of each month. My personal bank cheque marked VOID is enclosed.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Memberships and donations are tax deductible. Charitable Registration #118894047**

(2:3)



#### Our Aims and Objectives

To promote respect for all human life from conception to natural death.

To uphold and defend the right to life, the basic human right on which all other rights depend.

To contribute to the understanding of the people of Edmonton and the surrounding areas, by education, that society has a duty to protect this right.

We are committed to peaceful actions to fulfill our mission.