

# CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE EDUCATION FUND

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## *To Live Each Day with Dignity*

by Monsignor Ignacio Barreiro-Carámbula,  
Interim President, Human Life International

During their June 2011 semi-annual meeting the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a public statement on the topic of Physician Assisted Suicide (PAS) entitled *To Live Each Day with Dignity: A Statement on Physician-Assisted Suicide*. As the risk of legalization of assisted suicide grows worldwide including in the United States, it is very important that everyone, not only Catholics, read it, not only to become aware of this mounting menace to life, but to grow in our commitment to oppose it.

A fundamental starting point is the idea that all suicide as a grave offence against love of self -- one that also breaks the bonds of love and solidarity with family, friends, and God. It also reaffirms that to assist another's suicide is to take part in "an injustice which can never be excused, even if it is requested" (John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 66). This goes together with a basic Christian belief that is grounded in natural law and revelation: that we are not the owners, but rather the stewards, of our lives, and thus we do not have the right to decide when our life should come to an end.

The bishops forcefully argue against the contemporary propaganda that considers suicide the last freedom of human existence, saying that when a person commits suicide he operates under an illusion of freedom. Many laws that permit assisted suicide do not prescribe an evaluation of the mental condition of the person that requests suicide, so there is no way to assess if the freedom of this person is impaired. In the states of Oregon and Washington we have something that is more concerning. Once the lethal drugs are prescribed there is no way of verifying if the person who requested them is still acting freely, or if he is under pressure to take the poison, as there may be other persons interested in hastening his death.

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The bishops very rightly denounce this situation stating that, "Here the line between assisted suicide and homicide becomes blurred." It should be evident that to offer lethal drugs to persons who are vulnerable and depressed is the worst form of neglect. Such abandonment is a form of abuse, and is a mistreatment and exploitation of vulnerable persons.

Assisted suicide requires a distorted view of freedom, by creating an *expectation* that certain people, unlike others, will be served by being helped to choose death. Really, here we have a terrible form of discrimination. As the document states, "This biased judgment is fueled by the excessively high premium our culture places on productivity and autonomy, which tends to discount the lives of those who have a disability or are dependent on others."

The statement clearly shows how assisted suicide leads to involuntary euthanasia:

*Thus in countries that have used the idea of personal autonomy to justify voluntary assisted suicide and euthanasia, physicians have moved on to take the lives of adults who never asked to die, and newborn children who have no choice in the matter. They have developed their own concept of a 'life not worth living' that has little to do with the choice of the patient. Leaders of the 'aid in dying' movement in our country have also voiced support for ending the lives of people who never asked for death, whose lives they see as meaningless or as a costly burden on the community.*

Assisted suicide is based on a wrong and perverted form of compassion. We cannot eliminate suffering by the killing of the persons who are in pain. True compassion alleviates suffering while maintaining a very active link of charity with those who suffer. Rather, as the document states with clarity, "Taking life in the name of compassion also invites a slippery slope toward ending the lives of people with non-terminal conditions."

## A Room at the Inn

A society dominated by a euthanastic mentality adds to the suffering of the seriously ill people. These patients will soon realize that society as a whole see their death as an acceptable or even desirable solution to their problems, and will be dominated by a feeling of isolation and hopelessness. Here we should add that in a society that has not yet permitted involuntary euthanasia, those patients would feel the pressure to ask for assisted suicide or voluntary euthanasia.

Instead, as the document states, persons suffering from serious illness should be surrounded by "love, support, and companionship, providing the assistance needed to ease their physical, emotional, and spiritual suffering." The document highlights the importance of an effective palliative care that would take care of the physical and spiritual needs of the patients. This would provide patients a good opportunity to; "devote their attention to the unfinished business of their lives, to

***Assisted suicide is based on a wrong and perverted form of compassion.***

arrive at a sense of peace with God, with loved ones, and with themselves."

This valuable document presents

a good summary of well-argued reasons for why a Catholic should strongly oppose any form of assisted suicide, which is a sure road towards the legalization of euthanasia. It shows how we need to be strong messengers of the Gospel of Life, defending with courage, intelligence and love the lives of those who are vulnerable, but who are threatened because of severe illness or different types of handicaps.

Defending those who are defenseless, whether they are elderly, severely disabled, emotionally troubled, or unborn, is a totally non-negotiable principle that should be an integral part of the social and political commitment of all Catholics.

<http://www.hli.org/index.php/component/acajoom/?act=mailing&task=view&listid=2&mailingid=774>

Many pregnant college-aged women—already struggling to get through college—are easily persuaded that they must abort their babies in order to earn their degree and begin a career. Smelling blood in the water, recruiters like Planned Parenthood aggressively target college campuses across the nation, ready to capitalize on the fear and hopelessness these single women face. Their goal: to convert this fear into an asset that keeps the abortion industry flush with money.

Fortunately for these women, there are those who offer the resources needed to make a decision that they and their babies can live with. Recently, pro-life leaders gathered at Belmont Abbey College in North Carolina for the groundbreaking ceremony of what's being called the first college-based maternity and after-care residential facility on a university campus.

*Room At The Inn* has been a safe haven and source of hope for pregnant mothers and their children since 1994. Now it will offer a facility on the campus of Belmont Abbey College that will be fully equipped to house up to 15 mothers and infants and eight toddlers for up to two years. Each mother will have her own private bedroom and bath, as well as access to shared dining and laundry rooms. Administrative and counseling services will be readily available to these mothers to aid them in practical ways with the tangible skills and resources necessary to effectively care for their newborns.

Thanks to the generous donations of countless private individuals and organizations since 2008, \$2.2 million of the \$3 million cost has been raised (with donations still coming in to help meet their goal). Even the four acres of land on which the facility will sit has been donated by the Benedictine Monks of Belmont Abbey. *Room At The Inn* highlights a side of the pro-life movement not typically portrayed by the controversy-driven mainstream media. Contrary to their reporting, pro-lifers deeply care about the mothers during and after the births of their babies.

This is just another example of pro-lifers banding together as an army of help and hope to make a difference in the lives of many women and future generations.

### ***End-of-Life Decisions Conference***

**Saturday September 10, 2011 9am – 2pm**

**St. Mary Cathedral. St. Francis Hall San Francisco**

**Cost \$40, includes catered breakfast**

**For additional information contact**

**[evansv@sfarchdiocese.org](mailto:evansv@sfarchdiocese.org) or call 415-614-5533**

# **Student Report**

## **A Special Thanks to California Right to Life Education Fund**

**By Maddie Lopez**

I have been fortunate enough to receive a good many resources and supplies from the California Right to Life Education Fund. Words can't express how grateful I am to have been given the wonderfully helpful items.

We recently started a pro-life club at my high school, and I was having a hard time getting people interested. Then I met Cecelia Cody at a monthly mall table. She brought a full box of so many useful items. When I got home and sorted through all the materials in the box: 2" buttons, Precious Feet pins, a couple t-shirts, Pro-life and abstinence bracelets, pamphlets and more pamphlets, 10 week baby models that we can give to others, and you name it, it was in the box! I was so ecstatic when I brought the materials to the next high school pro-life club meeting, where many of the items were in high demand. Many of the student members put the Precious Feet pins on their backpacks, along with a button that said "Choose Life!" My friends in the club were then more interested in learning more because they now had outward signs of an inward dedication.

The next time I met with Miss Cody she gave us a copy of Abby Johnson's book Unplanned. Abby Johnson is a former director of a Planned Parenthood abortion mill in Byran, Texas, who had a conversion experience and is now pro-life. Friends lined up to read the book, and before our school year ended, we donated it to our school's library. It is a great book, and it was amazing knowing that via this piece of literature, the truth would get out, thanks to the generosity of the California Right to Life Ed Fund!

And... On a side note, my friend Susie who is now a sophomore in college, was at my house and we were talking about pro-life issues. She had gotten involved at the pro-life booth at her school, and we were just casually talking about the kinds of things their club did. Then I remembered the box I had with all the bracelets, buttons, baby models, pamphlets, etc. I ran to my room and pulled it out. Susie's arms were then loaded with all sorts of pro-life items! And from what I was told later on, they were extremely useful, and she was asking for more!

## **All thanks to the California Right to Life Ed Fund!**

### **From the Office**

by Cecelia Cody, Administrative Director

I don't know about you, but I seem to get a lot of phone calls from charities seeking donations. Recently I began asking what percentage of the monies donated actually are used for direct support of the cause. I have been ASTOUNDED to find that in most cases only about 20% of the funds donated go to direct aid for the cause, the remainder being administrative/fund raising.

We at California Right to Life Educational Fund are honored to be part of the Combined Federal Campaign, the federal government employee's charitable giving campaign, and as part of the annual application process we are required to provide the percentage of our funding that goes to administrative and fund raising compared to program expenses. We are proud to report to the CFC, and to you our members, that our administrative and fund raising has always been under 10%. The actual numbers for the past four years are as follows: 2010 7.9%; 2009 7.8%; 2008 8.5%; 2007 7.1%; and this year we are tracking at 9%.

So what do we do with your donations? Our efforts can be divided into four main categories.

- Counseling – The cell phone is answered 24/7/365 to counsel individuals and families on critical life issue decisions, including pre-and post abortive women, end of life issues, vaccines. The most common call is, "How much do you charge for an abortion?" (See insert below for our answer) We often provide referrals to other pro-life organizations including Birthright, Pregnancy Centers, Rachel's Vineyard, and Life Legal Defense Foundation (a special thank you to these lawyers who so often provide guidance on patients rights, and other legal matters.)
- Education including information tables, providing materials to students and teachers for class presentations, providing student pro-life clubs' "start-up" materials (see article this page.)

**Do you know someone who might  
be considering abortion?  
Make sure they get the facts first!  
A LIFE depends on it...  
1-800-395-HELP (4357)**

We receive requests for information on vaccines, end of life issues, fetal development, and stem cell research. We also go into classrooms and provide talks on abstinence and STI, stem cell research or whatever the requested topic might be. And let us not forget the newsletter you are reading, and our website (a special thank you to our webmaster!)

- Media interviews – we are a primary contact for the media: TV, radio, magazines and newspapers when there is a breaking story with a life perspective. Recently we were asked to go on camera to discuss pending legislation at both the federal and state levels.
- Library – we maintain a resource library, with current as well as “historical” books, videos, tapes, and often receive requests to lend to classrooms.

So next time you are considering which charities to support, ask them the percentage that goes to actual program services, and remember that Cal Right to Life Educational Fund has one of the lowest rates around.

And finally, a special THANK YOU to everyone who continues to donate regularly; this is one of the reasons our administrative costs are so low: we don't have to spend money on fundraising!

## Upcoming Events

Visit [www.calendarforlife.org](http://www.calendarforlife.org) for the latest and most up to date listing of activities and events happening in your area.

### WHO IS CALIFORNIA RIGHT TO LIFE?

This is the newsletter of **California Right to Life Education Fund**, a 501-c-3 organization established to educate the public about pro-life issues. Donations to the **EDUCATION FUND** are **tax-deductible** and can be sent to P.O. Box 4343, Walnut Creek, CA 94596-0343.

California Right to Life **Committee, Inc.** is a 501-c-4 organization providing information on legislative issues affecting the right to life, and pro-life political advocacy. **CRLC, Inc. is not permitted**, under IRS regulations, to offer a tax deduction for donations. \$24.99 annually is requested for a subscription to the CRLC legislative email updates list and can be sent to 1920 Monument Blvd #309, Concord, CA 94520.

Both are affiliates of American Life League, headed by Judie Brown, and share the same “no-exceptions, no excuses” beliefs and the same dedication to promoting the Culture of Life, respecting all innocent human life from the single-cell stage to natural death.