

*Behold I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.
Matthew 28:20*

National Bioethics Newsletter

The Feast of the Holy Innocents..

'Our souls have escaped like a bird from the hunter's net' Psalm 124 vs 7.

We cannot know from Matthew's gospel (2:16-18) how many babies, infants and toddlers were slaughtered by Herod's fury. Matthew focuses on the grief of their mothers expressed in the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy:

*A voice was heard in Ramah,
Sobbing and loudly lamenting;
It was Rachel weeping for her children,
refusing to be comforted
Because they were no more.*

The Holy Innocents have been crowned with martyrdom by the Church. They died both for Jesus Christ, whom they did not know, and also in Jesus' stead. Martyrs by blood, the Holy Innocents are described by St Augustine as *'the first buds of the Church killed by the frost of persecution'*. A mural in Holy Innocents' Church Croydon NSW reveals the horror and sorrow of that day, but its towering presence in the church 2000 years later is also a witness to the eternal flowers of martyrdom.

Rachel had wept at the place where the Israelites had been herded into captivity. Together with modern human cruelties, persecutions, abortion and genocide, the Holy Innocents remind us of the treasure of each created human life. The eternal value of each person is not clearly seen in a fallen world. Fear and insecurity both deafened and blinded Herod to the infinite worth of a human life. No one advised him differently, no one challenged him. Our modern sensitivities can also be dulled and dimmed - in need of much stronger lighting. Just as the sense of sin was missing in Herod's ambit it can be equally missing in our own times and in ourselves. As yeast and salt, however, each one of us has a role to play in the progression of humanity. We recognize the gift of life and, like Balaam's donkey, will not be beaten and driven down a godless path where life is cheap and disposable, where others' lives will be judged worthless by the more vocal and powerful in our own ambit. We may feel small and voiceless, but our Baptism and Confirmation give us lifelong gifts of true knowledge, counsel, wisdom and courage.



Inside this issue

[The Holy Innocents.....1](#)

[Peer-reviewed evidence.....2](#)

[Standards of evidence.....3](#)

[Poorer outcomes for children.....4](#)

'I am reminded of your sincere Faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice' 2 Tim 1:5





Queensland's Law Reform Commission makes a third attempt to legalize abortion

The new Palaszczuk government has ordered a review to modernize abortion legislation in Queensland. Their laws had offered some protection to the unborn throughout the 20th century. The independent, Qld MP Rob Pyne, had proposed two draft abortion legalizing bills which failed to gain enough support as they set **no gestational limits**, and had to be withdrawn.

The Commission has released a consultation paper and its chairman, Justice David Jackson, cited interview evidence that fear of prosecution impeded 'the provision of a full range of safe, accessible and timely reproductive services'. There were 10,421 abortions in Queensland in 2017, with 140 occurring at 20 weeks gestation. Justice Jackson said there were questions about how to define a lawful abortion.

The Catholic Church celebrates human life and the family more than .. any other institution in today's world. CATHOLICSCOMEHOME.org

*Mary,
woman of decision,
illuminate our mind
and our heart,
so that we may obey,
unhesitating, the word
of your son Jesus;
Give us the courage to
decide,
Not to let ourselves be
dragged along letting
others direct our life.
Mary,
Woman of action,
Obtain that our hands
and feet move with
haste toward others,
As you did.*

The Law Reform Commission will be looking at:

1. Gestational limits.
2. Whether a doctor should have to consult with another medical practitioner.
3. Whether a doctor would have the right to refuse to terminate a pregnancy.
4. Whether 'safe zones' are needed around clinics to prevent harassment.

In relation to restricted or unrestricted gestational limits, the Commissions report does not mention fetal pain, but refers obliquely to 'the interests of the fetus'. The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) issued a statement to the Queensland Government in relation to proposed legalization of abortion. This statement sadly favoured unrestricted abortion to any gestation abrogating any responsibility toward the fetus as patient. The College stated:

'Gestational limits discriminate against the most vulnerable of women...'

RANZCOG acknowledges the right of practitioners to hold a conscientious objection to termination of pregnancy, *but requires that patients seeking that service be referred elsewhere or informed where and how the service can be obtained.*

RANZCOG insist on referral by proxy.

Non-compliance with codes of conduct or ethical standards of medical profes-



*Victoria falls to euthanasia. NSW rejects it by one vote.
'Euthanasia hides behind alleged compassion..' Pope Francis.*

Victoria has passed the nicely named 'Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill'. The Labor party had not taken this policy to the 2014 election, and lacked a mandate. The Legislative Assembly passed the Bill by 47 votes to 37, and the Legislative Council by 22 votes to 18. Eligible persons need only have a condition that "cannot be relieved in a manner the person deems tolerable" which wording has raised serious problems (discussed below) in Oregon, USA. **Parliamentary euthanasia advocates rejoiced, congratulated and embraced each other, after a 28 hour debate** in a fairly empty chamber.

In contrast, Pope Francis has pointed out that euthanasia 'hide(s) behind alleged compassion to justify killing a patient...**true compassion does not celebrate a person passing away.. that would mean the triumph of selfishness, of that "throw away culture"** that rejects and despises people who do not meet certain standards of health, beauty or usefulness'.

Premier Andrews cited his own father slipping away quietly during the year after cancer diagnosis and management. He seemed unaware his father could have declined treatment. All popes have agreed with Pius XII 'there is no obligation to have recourse in all circumstances to every possible remedy, and that in some cases it is permissible to refrain from their use.' Pope Francis recently stated 'it is morally licit to decide not to adopt therapeutic measures, or to discontinue them when their use does not meet that ethical standard ..(of) due proportion in the use of remedies'.

It is impossible to further the common good without acknowledging and defending the right to life, upon which all the other inalienable rights of individuals are founded and from which they develop.

Evangelium Vitae -

101 Saint John Paul II.

Blessed be thou Oh Lord, teach me thy statutes! With my lips I declare all the ordinances of thy mouth.

Psalm 119 vs 10-13



Time and again Jesus bears us on his shoulders. No one can strip us of the dignity bestowed upon us by this boundless and unfailing love.

Let us not flee from the resurrection of Jesus, let us never give up, come what will. May nothing inspire more than his life, which impels us onward.

Pope Francis

Victoria copies Oregon Law

Irreversible and incurable illness is promised as the only access to euthanasia. Oregon’s Health Authority, however, blurs the definition of ‘incurable and irreversible’. The Authority’s research analyst admits its euthanasia legislation can be interpreted to include death which would be inevitable without treatment. A disease might be called ‘incurable’ in Oregon even if it is quite treatable, such as in the case of diabetes. **Their Dying with Dignity Act can include any person with an illness who would die in 6 months without treatment.** If the person considers the treatment (eg insulin) too onerous, they would qualify for euthanasia. Similarly, regarding the cost of treatment: **‘if the patient cannot pay for the treatment then the disease remains incurable’.** Health Insurers in Nevada have utilized this and refused to pay for some treatments but agreed to pay for euthanasia.

URGENT RESPONSE NEEDED TO PROTECT RELIGIOUS FREEDOMS

During the summer holidays when most families are absorbed with being a family and often away, there has been a call for submissions and letters. **A narrow window of time has been allowed for our own contributions to the Review which will determine the effect of same sex marriage legislation on freedom of religion, freedom of conscience, parental rights and other human rights. Letters, emails and submissions are due in by 31st January 2018.**

1. Post letters to: The Expert Panel on Religious Freedom,

C/O Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

PO Box 6500

Canberra ACT 2600

2. Or Email to: religiousfreedom@pmc.gov.au

3. Or submissions are to be submitted through the online portal (to open, hold down ctrl key and then click on link. Alternatively, copy and paste the link into your internet browser address bar)

<https://pmc.gov.au/domestic-policy/religious-freedom-review/submission>

Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception pray for us.

Dr Deirdre Little, mbbs dranzcog facrrm grad cert bioeth.

CWLA Inc National Bioethics Convenor 02 66552111 h; 02 66551755 w.

Photos from Pexels