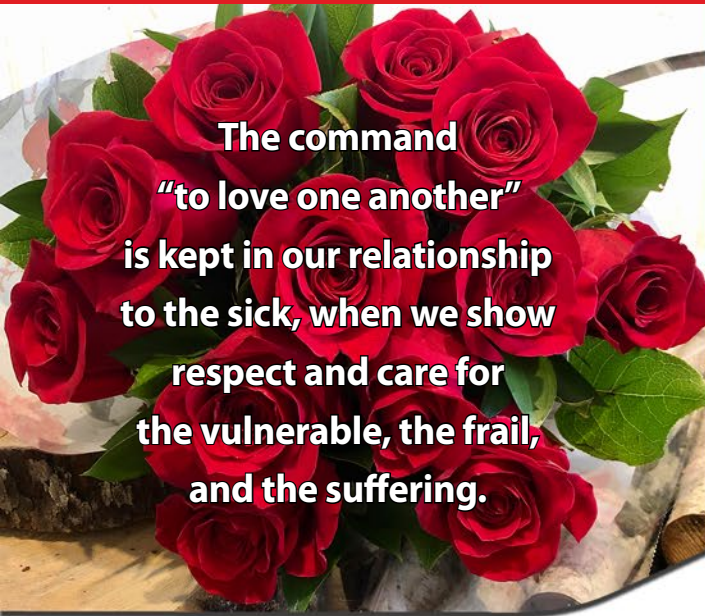


RESPECT HEALTH - RESPECT LIFE!



The command
"to love one another"
is kept in our relationship
to the sick, when we show
respect and care for
the vulnerable, the frail,
and the suffering.

A  Ω
Calgary Pro-Life
THANK YOU

**FOR SUPPORTING CALGARY PRO-LIFE
EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND MORE!**

**THE 41ST ANNUAL HIKE FOR LIFE
WILL BE A VIRTUAL EVENT
AGAIN THIS YEAR.**



POSITIVELY PRO-LIFE

FEBRUARY 2021

President's Message

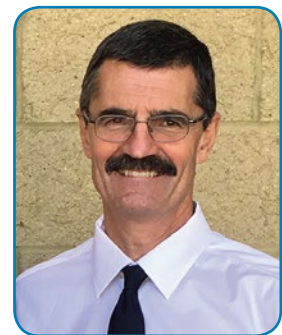
For this newsletter, the Board members challenged each other to adopt Health as our theme. We are hoping to share a message of hope amidst a world that is focused on a global health pandemic (COVID-19). Adverse health always has a purpose, and it is up to us to ponder its true meaning. Hopefully, our sharing will give you pause to reflect upon your personal health experiences, or those of your close family and friends. Adverse health often helps us to "see" what a miracle life is; and also, how we are looked after by our good God in times of healthiness. A balanced perspective toward health will help us as we journey forward in life.

I share a few recent experiences that focus upon close friends. This Christmas season was interrupted several times with phone calls from distraught friends who were enduring poor health in their families, and even, unfortunately, the passing of loved ones. A caring father asked for prayers for his son, who passed away only a week later, on Christmas eve. A good mother of several children suffered a cardiac arrest on Christmas day. Another couple were experiencing the loss of twins through miscarriage. Unfortunate events like these strike us to the core. They draw us into the pain

and suffering of those around us, especially when they are our friends. Perhaps you have had similar experiences in the recent past. How did you respond upon hearing of these actual experiences?

Adverse health will always be with us. Is there a person alive who has not experienced suffering in body, mind, or soul? As we endure the ups and downs of healthiness, are we not seeing a purpose in these cycles? When the sickness results in mortal death, are we not reminded of a transcendent purpose beyond our earthly existence? Just as one season follows the last we look forward, or back, upon the season we prefer. With each passing sickness, we have a greater appreciation for the miracle of good health and the miracle of life itself.

Our world appears to be enduring global health problems at this time. An aging population has always presented a significant health challenge. Coping in our complex world is also becoming a matter of health management for many. Good people will respond to these challenges and tend to those in need. As always, this includes people of faith who



Paul O'Leary
President

pray for those in need and provide the unseen comfort that comes from above. I have experienced the good of others in my times of need since my serious car accident last year. I know you, too, will have similar experiences to reflect upon. Perhaps global adversity is a gift from above. Perhaps we are being sensitized to the plight of others as we experience our health issues. Let us seek wisdom as we ponder the meaning behind these personal and global health challenges. With grace from above, hopefully we can adopt a disposition that favours the good of all.

Our Work at Calgary Pro-Life Assn.

by Monique Achtman, Educational Resource Consultant

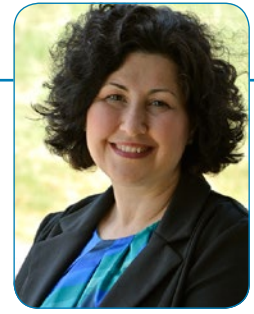
For more than 40 years, we have been bringing educational, life-affirming pro-life presentations to students in schools. We are cognizant of the life and health issues that are affecting the members of our families, our friends, and the greater community at large now.

We aim to encourage a respect for life that starts with gratitude for the gift of life from our earliest existence. We bring awareness to the remarkable gifts held within each person in our world, including you! We encourage our listeners to confidently be open to their own

life, and those that come to them any time during their lifetime, for example, when meeting a new sibling for the first time; when visiting their grandparents; through a new pregnancy; or an encounter with a vulnerable person.

COVID-19 restrictions have limited our in-person visits to schools. However, we are working on tweaking the presentations to share 'virtually' through Zoom.

We are also creating resources that can be shared in schools to give positive reinforcement of the ideals of re-



specting health of the physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual aspects of our body, mind and soul, from conception until natural death. (*Hints for puzzle on page 3.*)

Thank you for your continued prayers and financial support as we promote the sanctity of all human life.

Christmas Miracles

by Pam Carton, Past President

Truly, Christmas 2020 was a different Christmas than we have ever known. Traditionally, in my household, we always decked the halls and sang Christmas carols beginning on Christmas eve, followed by attending Midnight Mass, and continuing Christmas celebrations until January 6, the Epiphany of the Lord on the 12th day of Christmas. Epiphany always concluded with giving gifts to the little ones and finding three coins in the cake for the three kings of the day. Both the beginning and the end of Christmas included family dinner for as many as we could fit around the table. But 2020 would allow for none of that, and I resigned myself to a quieter Christmas. I considered that perhaps God was pointing us toward a simpler—more focused on Christ's birth—Christmas, and that this was an unexpected blessing of COVID-19.

In the late afternoon, after what they tell me was a lovely, small Christmas dinner with just the members of my household, we were relaxing in the family room. Without much warning, I collapsed into a cardiac arrest. For the next 36 hours I was in critical condition and the medical staff did not think I would

survive. My children got busy contacting all our relatives, friends and my parish community, asking for prayers. They arranged for Fr. Jonathan to come and give me the anointing of the sick. My oldest son had all the staff at All Saints High, where he teaches, praying for me. Brad and Edrienne Abel contacted their friends and had 100 of them praying for me all Christmas night. The Trinitarians of Mary, in Mexico, began praying for me before the Blessed Sacrament. Members of the Community Cenacolo America houses also began praying for me before the Blessed Sacrament, both in America and at their houses all over Europe. There were many people praying for me across Canada, and in Calgary especially.

On Boxing Day morning, things were not looking good for me and someone from the medical team called to tell my husband, John, that they were taking me to surgery and would be putting me on life support. My heart would not come out of shock. A few hours later, they called again, this time to say that they had aborted the plan to do surgery because just as they were beginning, my heart suddenly came back to life! It



was a miracle! The first thing I remember is being moved out of the ICU on New Year's Eve. I still have no memory of anything after December 23. Since then, I have been on a slow road to recovery.

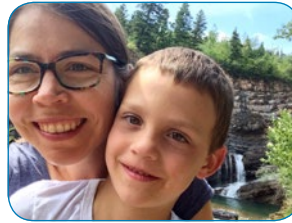
This experience has been life-giving to my family and friends because while my actual recovery was a miracle, and so clearly the result of prayer, the true meaning of selfless love, the true meaning of Christmas was made crystal clear. All traces of the secular Christmas celebration disappeared leaving only love and service, for me, for my husband, and for each other. There have been so many acts of kindness and generosity from my whole community! All the petty disagreements and familial irritations disappeared, replaced by the only important reality, LOVE.

Christmas 2020 will be always remembered as the Christmas we learned to love one another and to trust in the love of God. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" [John 3:16].

In Grief, We Continue to Choose Life

by Liisa Honish, Board Member

This past January, my family and I celebrated what would have been my son's 11th birthday. He died 2½ years ago. In that time, my view of what pro-life means, and the phrase *choose life* has been drastically altered. There are many ways in grief, and in the absence of grief, that a person chooses life.



We choose life each time we desire to give up, but persevere. We choose life when we choose mercy and forgiveness. We choose life when we choose to have compassion and love for others, especially for those people who are most difficult to love. We choose life when we step out with courage to speak the truth with love. We choose life when we respond with care and dignity to those who attack us or revile us. We choose life when we listen to others and accompany them on their paths. We choose life by moving forward in faith, even when our own path seems unclear. We choose life when we forgive ourselves and ask others for forgiveness.

In these times of isolation, which some days seem will never end, it can be hard keep sight of others and their needs. How can we love the people who are in isolation? How can we share our love with others and help them to know that they are not alone? During these dark, cold, winter days it can be hard to remember the warmth and joy that small gestures can bring: a note, a meal, a phone call or even a text message. We choose life when we choose to love others, even when our world seems cold and dark. For me, pro-life means choosing life, and choosing to live means choosing to love.

Respect Life, Hike for Life

by John Siroishka, Board Member/Treasurer

Believe in yourself, believe in life.

Believe that the Lord will lead you to better days.



The year 2020 marked a special milestone for Calgary Pro Life Assn. It was the 40th anniversary of our annual **Hike For Life** fundraiser. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hike was modified to be a virtual event thereby allowing for social distancing, and on-line donations. We survived the year and are pleased to say we did it with the assistance and generosity of you, our donors and volunteers.

This year 2021 requires the same flow of energy and a renewed commitment from our Board, and from our members and donors alike, as we continue to revise and adjust the educational pro-life programs so we can continue to bring the presentations to the students in their classrooms virtually.

This year, non-profit charities will need well-organized efforts to sustain some measure of success. We will keep you informed through newsletters and informal presentations as we progress through this year and through COVID-19.

We, on the Board of Directors, thank you for your continued support. Stay well.

Respect Life – Our Gifts

Unscramble the following letters and solve the puzzle phrase below:

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41st Annual (Virtual) Hike for Life



SAVE THE DATE
HIKE FOR LIFE
MAY 8, 2021

Calgary Pro-Life Assn. Membership & Donation – 2021

First Name _____

Last Name _____

Email Address _____

Phone _____

Preferred Method of Contact: ☐ Email ☐ Phone

Address _____


City _____ Province _____

Postal Code _____

Membership Type: ☐ Student \$10 ☐ Adult \$20 ☐ Family \$30

Donation \$ _____ Total \$ _____

CHARITABLE B/N: 10683-0995-RR0001

For God 

SO LOVED THE WORLD
THAT HE GAVE HIS
ONLY
BEGOTTEN
SON SO
THAT WHOEVER
BELIEVES
IN HIM SHALL
HAVE EVERLASTING
Life 

Special Invitation to Members and Guests

from the CPL Board of Directors

We look forward to seeing you at our virtual AGM on March 29 to listen to the life-affirming messages that will be shared by Amanda Achtman, Ottawa, ON. Amanda grew up in Calgary and won the Knights of Columbus *Respect Life Oratorical Contests* in 2008 and 2009. Guests are invited to join us for the keynote presentation and members are invited to stay for the business meeting following.

St. Valentine

St. Valentine spent his life teaching about faith in God. Through his example he showed people compassion and love. As pro-lifers we can be brave about our faith and show respect for all human life.

Notice is hereby given that the Calgary Pro-Life Assn.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held virtually
on Monday, March 29, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. MT

Guest Speaker: Amanda Achtman
Dying to Meet You: Why I Blog Daily about Death
www.DyingToMeetYou.ca

Please email pro-life@shaw.ca to register, and
to receive the Zoom Meeting Info.

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Calgary, AB T2G 2R7

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EMAIL: pro-life@shaw.ca

RENEW MEMBERSHIPS AND
DONATE ON OUR WEBSITE:
www.calgaryprolife.com

Thank you for your
continued support!


Calgary Pro-Life