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Holy Rosary, and Fr. Vito Marziliano and Mary Benincasa at St. Clare's. CCBI is fortunate to be welcomed into different parishes and to meet so many interesting and faith-filled people.

I attended the COLF (Canadian Organization for Life and Family) annual seminar in Ottawa in March, and found the presentations by Msgr. Tony Anatrella on homosexuality very informative. This ethical topic has many bioethical implications, in itself, in AIDS prevention and treatment, in IVF (in vitro fertilization) and in the different ways of bringing children into the world that now exist, thanks to reproductive technologies. The implications these technologies have for family life and the shaping of society are extensive, and I plan to write further about these

matters in our next set of publications, since we receive many calls to our office about them. Thank you to Michèle Boulva and her team for hosting such an informative meeting.

Archbishop Richard Smith of Edmonton and his pastoral team have presented a programme called "Nothing More Beautiful" for four years now, with one more year still to come. Involving a catechist and a witness, it is a powerful tool for evangelization, since it is a call to explore our faith and discipleship more closely. I was privileged to be asked to be a witness on April 19, 2012, following Archbishop Lacroix of Quebec as the catechist. It was a truly spiritual experience, and Archbishop Smith and his team are both welcoming and organized, making it also a very pleasant experience. I am grateful to them for inviting so many people to be part of their faith development.

Dr. Rory Fisher and I presented a joint seminar on physician-assisted suicide, "Assisted Suicide: A Clear and Present Danger?" on March 28, at USMC Faculty of Theology. Rory represented the Sovereign Order of Malta, and I represented CCBI. The valuable information delivered in the presentation can be viewed on CCBI's website: [www.ccbi-utoronto.ca](http://www.ccbi-utoronto.ca), since it was videotaped by Thalia Flood, our talented young videographer and website manager.

We appreciate the references made to CCBI by *The Catholic Register*, and wish their staff well as they tackle so many important issues from a Catholic perspective.

Finally, thank you very much to our readers and followers for all your support, spiritual and/or financial. You make a difference!

**Moira McQueen**

# beadonor.ca

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CANADIAN CATHOLIC BIOETHICS INSTITUTE  
INSTITUT CANADIEN CATHOLIQUE DE BIOÉTHIQUE

UNIVERSITY OF ST MICHAEL'S COLLEGE  
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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### Executive Director's Message

CCBI is delighted to continue its collaboration with our friends at Radio Teopoli, and I was fortunate to be able to attend their annual dinner in March. It was encouraging to see numbers of their dedicated supporters, to meet old friends such as Fr. Bill Trusz of Hamilton Diocese, a long term broadcaster with them, and to meet some of the other presenters. Bridget Campion and I have committed to presenting a monthly programme on bioethics (Conversations in Bioethics) on Radio Teopoli, and we greatly enjoy preparing them. We hope that those who hear us benefit from our explanations of difficult concepts, and we are grateful to Laura Cirami, our producer, for her diplomatic guiding and editing of our efforts.

One of the issues we have been discussing is organ donation, and Bridget's article on that topic accompanies this newsletter. CCBI co-sponsored an evening seminar on organ donation along with Marilyn Elphick, Director of Chaplaincy at USMC, and Trillium Gift of Life. Bridget and I have presented two programmes on organ donation since then on Radio Teopoli giving the Catholic perspective. Both of us have been asked to speak at several CWL groups, and it is encouraging for

prospective donors and donees that the CWL has taken this issue up at the provincial and diocesan level.

Bridget addressed St. Joseph the Worker CWL in Oshawa on this topic, and I addressed the diocesan presidents of the Ontario Provincial CWL at a meeting in Toronto, as well as the CWL of St. Leo the Great Parish in Brooklin, Ontario.

CCBI is frequently invited to speak at CWL events, and as a twenty-six year member, I am happy to be giving something in return. I led a retreat at St. Bonaventure's CWL on St. Patrick's Day, and was asked to give a presentation on current issues in bioethics at the Edmonton Diocesan CWL conference in Red Deer, and at the Niagara Region Spring Conference in Niagara-on-the-Lake, both in April.

Our For People in the Pews programme in bioethics for lay people continues, with sessions being presented in Holy Rosary and St. Clare's parishes, Toronto, both during Lent. Thank you to all the people who publicized and organized these for us, especially Fr. Daniel Chui and Johan Van Nooten at

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Contact CCBI  
81 St. Mary Street  
Toronto, Ontario  
M5S 1J4  
(416) 926- 2335

[bioethics.usmc@utoronto.ca](mailto:bioethics.usmc@utoronto.ca)  
[www.ccbi-utoronto.ca](http://www.ccbi-utoronto.ca)

## Organ Donation: Catholic Considerations

Bridget Campion, PhD

A recent issue of this Newsletter contained CCBI's commitment to supporting organ donation. It is a commitment that is in keeping with Church Teaching; still, some clarification may be in order.

In the case of donating vital organs (those organs without which a person cannot live, e.g., a heart), the donor must be dead before the organs may be procured. This is called the Dead Donor Rule and, at this time, the Church recognizes that whole brain death criteria (that is, the irreversible cessation of all brain function, including both higher brain and brain stem activity) when rigorously established may provide a reliable indication that death has occurred. This means that people who have lost the higher brain function of consciousness but who have brain stem function (such as persons in a so-called persistent vegetative state or anencephalic infants) are not dead and must be treated and protected as the alive individuals that they are.

It is also possible for people to be "live" donors, that is, to make life-preserving gifts of a kidney or a part of a liver, for example, and continue to thrive after organ donation. However, it is important, according to Church Teaching, that live donors do not irreparably harm or compromise themselves in this act of charity. For instance, while they may donate one of two healthy kidneys (the remaining organ eventually assuming the work of the donated kidney), the donation of a retina or cornea (which would significantly compromise vision) is more problematic.

Whether from living or deceased persons, organ donation is meant to be a gift that is freely given: there must be free and informed consent on the part of the donor and there can be no buying or selling of organs. As desperate as the need for organs might be, the commercialization of organ transplantation can too easily involve the objectification of persons and the exploitation of vulnerable donors.

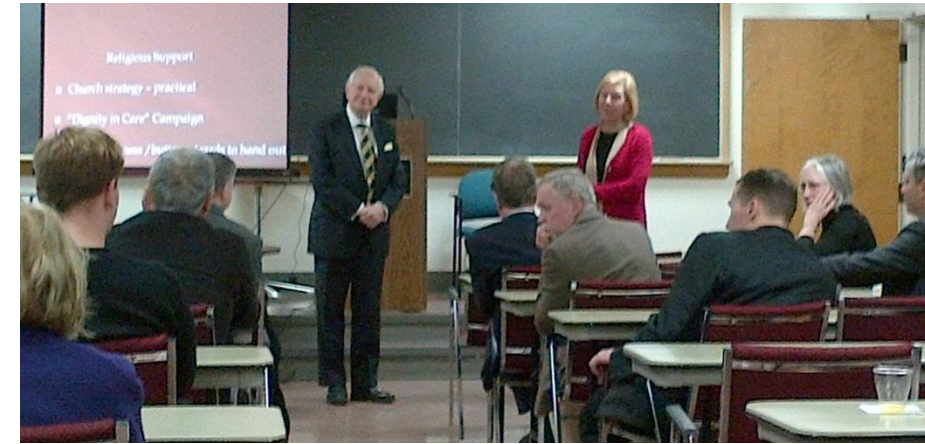
Finally, the Church recognizes that not everyone is called to be an organ donor – there is no obligation to donate one's organs. However, organ donation is not only permissible according to Church Teaching but is recognized as a true act of love that contributes to the Culture of Life.

Note: For recent Church Teaching on the subject (and sources for this piece) see:

Benedict XVI, "Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to Participants at an International Congress Organized by the Pontifical Academy for Life" (November 7, 2008)  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/speeches/2008/november/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20081107\\_acdlife\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/speeches/2008/november/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20081107_acdlife_en.html) (accessed March 2012)

John Paul II, "Address of His Holiness John Paul II to Participants of the First International Congress of the Society for Organ Sharing" (June 20, 1991)  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/1991/june/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19910620\\_trapianti\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/1991/june/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19910620_trapianti_en.html) (accessed April 2012)

John Paul II, "Address of the Holy Father John Paul II to the 18<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the Transplantation Society" (August 29, 2000)  
[http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_paul\\_ii/speeches/2000/jul-sep/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20000829\\_transplants\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2000/jul-sep/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20000829_transplants_en.html) (accessed March 2012)



## Organ Donation Response

Bridget Campion was at St. Joseph the Worker Parish in Oshawa and St. Alphonsus Liguori Parish in Peterborough speaking about the Catholic response to organ donation. She will be addressing the Kingston Diocesan Convention of the CWL of Canada in Kingston on May 5. The topic of her talk is Organ Donation: A Catholic Perspective. In 2011 the Catholic Women's League of Canada adopted a resolution to urge the Canadian government to establish a national registry for organ and tissue donation and transplantation.

Dr. Campion will also be conducting the series, "For People in the Pews" at St. John Bosco Parish in Brockville (April 30 - May 3) and at St. Francis de Sales Parish in Smiths Falls (May 11 and May 12).

## For People in the Pews

The Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute's "For People in the Pews" (FPIP) is a series designed to help Catholics understand emerging issues in bioethics and the Church's response to them. In each of four evenings, a member of CCBI's staff or Advisory Committee will lead parish groups through issues, cases and Church Teaching, leaving plenty of time for questions and discussion. The sessions are meant to be informative and relevant, addressing topics like end-of-life care, assisted human reproduction, living wills.

Openings are also available for Advent 2012 and Lent 2013.

For more information contact Bambi Rutledge  
[www.ccbi-utoronto.ca](http://www.ccbi-utoronto.ca) | 416 926 2335  
[bioethics.usmc@utoronto.ca](mailto:bioethics.usmc@utoronto.ca)



### Web News

Video and Audio transcripts of our events are now available in our media section:

- Assisted Suicide: A Clear and Present Danger?
- The Gift of Life — Organ Donation: A Catholic Perspective
- CCBI 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

For these recordings and more visit  
[ccbi-utoronto.com/media](http://ccbi-utoronto.com/media)



### Radio Teopoli AM530

Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute: Conversations in Bioethics are available on the Radio Teopoli website in the On-Demand library.

For more information please visit:  
[teopoli.com](http://teopoli.com)