

WELCOME TO ALL PARISHIONERS & GUESTS WHO HAVE JOINED US TODAY!



**ST. NICHOLAS THE WONDERWORKER PARISH
ПАРАФІЯ СВ. МИКОЛАЯ ЧУДОТВОРЦЯ**

Pastor: Fr. Yuriy Vyshnevsky

Emergency: 250.891.4507

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Facebook: [facebook.com/stnicholasvictoria](https://www.facebook.com/stnicholasvictoria)

1112 Caledonia Avenue, Victoria, BC V8T 1G1

Web: www.stnicholasparish.org E-mail: stnicks@telus.net

Tue-Sat DL - 9am; Sat Vespers-6pm; Sun DL - 10am

*The Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of New Westminster
Bishop: Most Rev. Ken Nowakowski
www.nweparchy.ca*

**ДВАДЦЯТЬ П'ЯТА НЕДІЛЯ ПІСЛЯ П'ЯТИДЕСЯТНИЦІ
TWENTY FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

Let us worthily honour John of the golden words, the never-setting star which enlightens everything under the sun with his rays of teaching. He is the preacher of penance and the sponge of purest gold which removes the cruel dampness of ignorance. He gives life to hearts that are torn by sin.

Let Chrysostom be exalted, for he is the earthly angel and the heavenly man, the eagle of great and good speech and the treasury of virtues. He is the firm rock and the example of the faithful, the one who is like the martyrs and who stands equal with the angels, for his teaching was the same as the apostles.

O thrice-venerable and most holy Father, you are the good shepherd and the student of Christ the chief Shepherd who gave his life for his flock. Now, ever-praised John Chrysostom, grant that through your prayers we may receive great mercy.



St. John Chrysostom

PLEASE JOIN US FOR COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP AFTER DIVINE LITURGY!

SUNDAY HYMNS	
OPENING HYMN	В Сильній Надії / Almighty Father pg. 276-278
COMMUNION HYMN	Витай Між Нами / With Solemn Greeting, Welcome the Lord pg. 244-245
CLOSING HYMN	О Спомай Нас / Always Protect Us pg. 364-366

Please join us today in singing our Sunday hymns!

SUNDAY & DAILY SCHEDULE		
SUNDAY, November 13	Divine Liturgy - for the Parishioners of St Nicholas Parish	10:00 AM
MONDAY, November 14	NO SERVICES	*****
TUESDAY, November 15	Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom	9:00 AM
WEDNESDAY, November 16	Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom	9:00 AM
THURSDAY, November 17	Divine Liturgy / Moleben on closing of the Year of Mercy	9AM/7PM
FRIDAY, November 18	Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom	9:00 AM
SATURDAY, November 19	Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom Vespers	9:00 AM 6:00 PM
SUNDAY, November 20	Divine Liturgy - for the Parishioners of St Nicholas Parish	10:00 AM

Please Note: to request a Divine Liturgy for a special intention, please see Fr. Yuriy to arrange for it!

SUNDAY EPISTLE READERS			
DATE	READING	UKRAINIAN	ENGLISH
SUNDAY, November 13	Eph. 5: 9-19	Yuliya Pelekhata	Rita Vanderven
SUNDAY, November 20	Eph. 6: 10-17	Glikeria Iwanuck	Darryl Huculak
SUNDAY, November 27	Col. 1: 12-18	Andrij Pelekhatyi	Graciela Spaciuk-Schwarz
SUNDAY, December 4	Col. 3: 4-11	Natalia Bryndak	William Vanderven

Thank you, Epistle readers, for your service in proclaiming God's Word!

PARISH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE	PASTORAL MINISTRY & HOLY MYSTERIES
CHAIRPERSON..... Alec Rossa - 250.472.3374	CONFESSIONS..... 1/2 hour before Liturgy
VICE-CHAIRPERSON..... Darlene DeMerchant - 250.727.3837	EUCCHARIST..... for the sick - any time
SECRETARY..... Cindy Lazaruk - 778.677.9072	BAPTISMS..... by appointment
TREASURER..... William Vanderven - 250.478.1458	MARRIAGES..... six months notice should be given to the parish priest, and he should be contacted before any other arrangements are made
FINANCIAL SECRETARY..... David Newberry - 250.598.8197	FUNERALS..... by appointment
FUNDRAISING/HALL RENTAL..... Robert Herchak - 250.386.7872	ANOINTING..... any time
MAINTENANCE..... Murray Chapman - 250.658.4769	HOSPITAL VISITS..... any time
LITURGICAL COMMITTEE... Motria Koropecy - 250.658.3051	
MEMBER AT LARGE..... Caroline Smudy - 778.440.9419	
VIBRANT PARISH..... Darlene DeMerchant - 250.727.3837	

Bequests & Wills: Leaving a bequeath is a process of giving a donation through your will. It is simply a distribution from your estate to a charitable organization through your last will and testament. It can be as small or as large a donation as you wish. It is important that you talk to your lawyer about the process. In your kindness please remember St Nicholas the Wonderworker Ukrainian Catholic Church in your bequeath and will. If anyone wishes to make such a bequeath in their will, the following clause may be included or added to a will: "I give, devise, and bequeath to St Nicholas the Wonderworker Ukrainian Catholic Parish - 1112 Caledonia Avenue, Victoria BC, V8T 1G1, the sum of \$ _____ (or _____% of my estate), to be used for the benefit of the parish and it's pastoral activities."

Vibrant Parish Prayer

O God, Creator of Heaven and Earth! Because of your indescribable love for us, you sent your Only-Begotten Son, Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ - The Way, The Truth, and The Life - and our Salvation. In His name, we turn to You. Strengthen our hearts and minds in Christian love and in unity of purpose as we strive to build a Vibrant Parish. Give us the grace to model our lives according to the Word of God. Instill in us the desire to pray and to celebrate the Holy Mysteries as one Christian Family in our Parish Community. Inspire us to follow Your great command to be a servant to the less fortunate among us! Grant this, O Lord, through the mercies and love for mankind of Your Only-Begotten Son with whom You are blessed, together with Your All-Holy, Good and Life-Giving Spirit, now and forever and ever. Amen!



THE VIBRANT PARISH

A PLACE TO ENCOUNTER THE LIVING CHRIST

Through the word, the Holy Mysteries & Prayer,
Serving One's Neighbor, Leadership
Fostering & Serving Unity and Missionary Spirit
(His Beatitude Sviatoslav)



Молитва Живої Парафії

Господи Ісусе Христе, Пастирю Добрий, як колись Ти пригорнув заблуканих овечок, щоб вони пізнали Твій голос і були Твоїм стадом, так і сьогодні глянь ласкаво з небесних висот на нашу парафію та зішли на неї Твого Святого Духа, щоб вона була місцем пізнання радості Доброї Новини. Скріплюй нас Твоєю присутністю та єднай нас кожночасно в молитві. Даруй нам духа служіння ближньому, щоб у нашій парафії кожний міг зустріти Тебе, милостивого Бога. Благослови наш духовний провід Твоєю мудрістю і дай, щоб ніхто з нас не шкодував ні часу, ні талантів, ні матеріальних дібр для розбудови Твого царства. Єднай нас у мирі та злагоді, щоб ми були Твоєю спільнотою любові. Всели в нас місійного духа, щоб ми стали тим світилом євангельського слова, молитви і добрих діл, що кличе кожного до участі в Божественному житті, щоб славилось, Спасе, Твоє Ім'я з безначальним Твоїм Отцем та пресвятим, благим і животворящим Твоїм Духом нині, і повсякчас, і на віки віків. Амінь.

DIVINE LITURGY PROPERS

The Divine Liturgy - An Anthology for Worship: Liturgy - pg. 388-461; propers - pg. 329

Troparion, Tone 1: Though the stone was sealed by the Judeans* and soldiers guarded Your most pure body,* You arose, O Saviour, on the third day,* and gave life to the world.* And so the heavenly powers cried out to You, O Giver of Life;* Glory to your resurrection, O Christ!* Glory to Your kingdom!* Glory to Your saving plan,* O only Lover of Humankind.

Glory: Kontakion, Tone 1: You arose in glory from the tomb* and with Yourself You raised the world.* All humanity acclaims You as God,* and death has vanished.* Adam exults, O Master,* and Eve, redeemed now from bondage, cries out for joy.* “You are the One, O Christ, Who offer resurrection to all.”

Now: Theotokion, Tone 1: When Gabriel uttered to You, O Virgin, his ‘Rejoice!’* – at that sound, the Master of all became flesh in You, the Holy Ark.* As the just David said,* You have become wider than the heavens carrying Your Creator.* Glory to Him Who dwelt in You!* Glory to Him Who came forth from You!* Glory to Him Who freed us through birth from You!

Prokimenon, Tone 1: Let Your mercy, O Lord,* be upon us,* as we have hoped in You. *Verse:* Rejoice in the Lord, O you just; praise befits the righteous.

Epistle - Eph. 5:9-19 - A Reading from the Letter of Saint Apostle Paul to Ephesians: Brothers and Sisters, live as children of light—for the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to find out what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to mention what such people do secretly; but everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for everything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, ‘Sleeper, awake! Rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’ Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts.

Alleluia, Tone 1: *Verse:* The God of gods, the Lord, spoke and summoned the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. *Verse:* Gather to Him His devout ones, who with sacrifice make covenant with Him.

Gospel - Luke 12:16-21 - The Lord spoke this parable: ‘The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, “What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?” Then he said, “I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.” But God said to him, “You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?” So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich towards God.’

Communion Verse: Praise the Lord from the heavens,* praise Him in the highest. Alleluia, alleluia,* alleluia!



Тропар, глас 1: Хоч запечатали камінь юдеї* і воїни стерегли пречисте тіло Твоє,* воскрес Ти, Спасе, на третій день,* даруючи життя світові.* Тому сили небесні взивали до Тебе, Життєдавче * Слава воскресінню Твоєму, Христе,* слава Царству Твоєму,* слава провидінню Твоєму,* єдиний Чоловіколюбче!

Слава: Кондак, глас 1: Воскрес Ти у славі як Бог із гробу* і світ із Собою воскресив;* людське ество Тебе, як Бога, оспівує* і смерть щезла.* Адам же ликує, Владико,* і Єва нині, з узів визволившись, радіє, взиваючи * Ти, Христе, Той, Хто всім подає воскресіння.

І нині: Богородичний, глас 1: Коли Гавриїл звістив Тобі, Діво: Радуйся!* то з цим голосом прийняв тіло Владика в Тобі, святім кивоті,* як мовив праведний Давид,* і Ти з'явилася просторішою небес, носивши Творця Свого.* Слава Тому, що поселився в Тобі!* Слава Тому, що вийшов із Тебе!* Слава Тому, що визволив нас народженням Твоїм.

Прокімен, глас 1: Милість Твоя, Господи, хай буде над нами,* бо ми надіялись на Тебе.
Стих: Радуйтеся, праведні, в Господі, правим належить похвала.

Апостол - Еф. 5:9-19 - До Ефесян Послання Святого Апостола Павла Читання: Браття і сестри, поведітьтеся, як діти світла. Плід світла є у всьому, що добре, що справедливе та правдиве. Шукайте пильно того, що подобається Господеві. Не беріть участі в безплідних ділах темряви, а радше їх картайте, бо що ті люди потай роблять, соромно й казати. Все, що ганиться, стає явним у світлі, а все, що виявляється, стає світлом. Тому говорить: Прокинься, сплячий, і встань із мертвих, а Христос освітить тебе. Тож уважайте пильно, як маєте поводитися: не як немудрі, а як мудрі, використовуючи час, бо дні лихі. Тому не будьте необачні, але збагніть, що є Господня воля. І не впивайтесь вином, бо в нім є блуд, а сповнюйтеся Духом. Проказуйте між собою вголос псалми й гимни та духовні пісні, співайте і прославляйте в серцях ваших Господа.

Алилуя, глас 1: Стих: Бог богів, Господь мовив, і призвав землю від сходу сонця до заходу. Стих: Зберіть Йому преподобних Його, що заповідують завіт Його в жертвах.

Євангеліє - Лука 12:16-21 - Господь розповів їм притчу, говорячи: В одного багача гоїно нива вродила була. І міркував він про себе й казав: Що робити, що не маю куди зібрати плодів своїх? І сказав: Оце я зроблю, порозвалюю клуні свої, і просторніші поставлю, і позбираю туди пашню свою всю та свій достаток. І скажу я душі своїй: Душе, маєш багато добра, на багато років складеного. Спочивай, їж та пий, і веселися! Бог же до нього прорік: Нерозумний, ночі цієї ось душу твою зажадають від тебе, і кому позостанеться те, що ти був наготовив? Так буває і з тим, хто збирає для себе, та не багатіє в Бога.

Причасний: Хваліте Господа з небес,* хваліте Його на висотах. Алилуя, алилуя, алилуя!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ **HAPPY BIRTHDAY** to ED SALYN, MATTHEW DEMERCHANT and all those who celebrated their birthdays this past week. May the Lord Our God continue to bless you abundantly and the Holy Mother of God protects you at all times. Многая Літа!

- ◆ **CONGRATULATIONS to JOAN & ALEC ROSSA** on their Wedding Anniversary. May you two continue be a blessing to God, to others, and to each other in your marriage together. Многая Літа!

- ◆ **HOLODMOR COMMEMORATION MEMORIAL** service & "hungry lunch - bread & water" (NEXT SUNDAY, Nov. 20; 2PM at the Ukr. Cultural Centre (3277 Douglas St).

- ◆ **THANK YOU** to all those who joined us last Sunday, Nov. 6, for Divine Liturgy and for the Vibrant Parish post Sobor meeting afterwards. Great presentations and very interactive discussions!

- ◆ **"INTERNET PORNOGRAPHY ADDICTION - A CATHOLIC APPROACH TO TREATMENT"**: Sr. Marysia Weber, R.S.M., D.O., a Religious Sister of Mercy of Alma, Michigan, is a physician certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. Sr. Marysia will be visiting our Diocese in November and will speak on this topic. All are welcome to attend. **Date:** Thu, Nov 17 - 7pm - St. Joseph the Worker parish, Victoria (785 Burnside Rd. W.).

- ◆ **THANK YOU** to CINDY LAZARUK, ROBERT HERCHAK, MOTRIA KOROPECKY, LILIIA PALYVODA, MURRAY & CAROL CHAPMAN and others for setting up the church hall and preparing lunch for the guests from Ukraine who visited our parish last Wednesday, Nov. 9. May God bless you all for your stewardship.

- ◆ **PARISH CALENDAR OF BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES:** If you would like to be included in our Parish Calendar of Birthday and Anniversary celebrations, please put date in our calendar located at the church vestibule. Each week, we will list the names in our parish bulletin so we can celebrate these happy occasions together!

- ◆ **TRAVELING ICON:** Anyone interested in gracing their home with Christ The Teacher Icon can call Darlene DeMerchant at [250.727.3837](tel:250.727.3837)

- ◆ **JOIN OUR CHOIR:** Do you enjoy singing? Please consider joining our St Nicholas Parish Choir and remember that we ALWAYS looking for new members! Contact Motria Koropecky for details at [250.658.3051](tel:250.658.3051)

◆**CATECHISM ANNOUNCEMENT:** *"And they were bringing to Him also the infants, in order that He may be touching them; but after the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, Let alone the little children to come to Me, and cease hindering them; for of such is the kingdom of God."* We are happy to welcome all children to our St. Nicholas The Wonderworker catechism program. Weekly classes are scheduled Sunday morning during Divine Liturgy. We want your children to learn more about their Catholic faith, sacred scripture, feast days, and religious practices and customs of the Ukrainian Catholic church. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Marian Chalifoux at [250.507.1005](tel:250.507.1005)

◆**PRAYER REQUEST:** Please keep in your prayers members of our parish, our family and friends who are ailing, are in hospitals, nursing homes and those who are not able to join actively in their community.

◆**THRIFTY'S PRE-PAID FOOD CARDS** - We all have to buy groceries. Why not have 6% of it returned back to the church at no extra charge! Cards are available in \$100, \$200, and \$500 denominations. Talk to Alec after today's liturgy to pre- order your cards. We need to sell A LOT of them! We encourage you to consider purchasing them for yourselves as gifts too.

◆**SUNDAY COFFEE VOLUNTEERS** act as hosts and serve light refreshments following the Sunday morning Divine Liturgy, providing an opportunity for the faithful to socialize with friends and visitors following their shared worship experience. We thank all of our parishioners who kind volunteer to serve refreshments. Whether you are new to the Parish, or are a long-time members, please join us for coffee.

◆**BE A STEWARD:** Have you ever wondered what more can you do to help our parish? Here are some suggestions: Steward of property security; Steward of grounds cleaning; Steward of cleaning church; Steward of church linen; Steward of outreach; Steward of caring; Steward of prayer; Steward of service. Quite often, our homebound or senior members, once active in their younger years, want to find purpose in their senior years. It's not only about doing but

CHRISTMAS FOOD FAIR FOOD PREPARATION SCHEDULE			
Wed. Nov. 9	Make, bake & bag kolachi	8:30 am-3:00 pm	Need 5-6 volunteers
Wed. Nov. 16	Other baking: TBD	TBD	Need 3-5 volunteers
Thu. Nov. 17	Other baking: TBD	TBD	Need 3-5 volunteers
Looking forward to another successful Christmas Food Fair. Many, many thanks for everyone's anticipated help. May God Bless You.			
For more info contact Robert Herchak at 250.386.7872 or email rlherchak@gmail.com			

about "BEING" present to others. Contact Fr. Yuriy **OR** Darlene DeMerchant for more information. You will be amazed how "BEING" can make a difference.

◆**SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 6 DONATION:** Coffee: \$40.95; Vigil lights: \$4.50; Loose collection: \$39.35; Envelope collection: \$524.00; Pre-authorized payments Oct 31 to Nov 6: \$330.00

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

This greatest and most beloved of all Christian orators was born in Antioch the Great in the year 344 or 347; his pious parents were called Secundus and Anthusa. After his mother was widowed at the age of twenty, she devoted herself to bringing up John and his elder sister in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. John received his literary training under Anthragathius the philosopher, and Libanius the sophist, who was the greatest Greek scholar and rhetorician of his day. Libanius was a pagan, and when asked before his death whom he wished to have for his successor, he said, "John, had not the Christians stolen him from us." With such a training, and with such gifts as he had by nature, John had before him a brilliant career as a rhetorician. But through the good example of his godly mother Anthusa and of the holy Bishop Meletius of Antioch, by whom he was ordained reader about the year 370, he chose instead to dedicate himself to God.

From the years 374 to 381 he lived the monastic life in the hermitages that were near Antioch. His extreme asceticism undermined his health, compelling him to return to Antioch, where Saint Meletius ordained him deacon about the year 381. Saint Meletius was called to Constantinople later that year to preside over the Second Ecumenical Council, during which he fell asleep in the Lord. In 386 Bishop Flavian ordained John presbyter of the Church of Antioch. Upon his elevation to the priesthood his career as a public preacher began, and his exceptional oratorical gifts were made manifest through his many sermons and commentaries.

They are distinguished by their eloquence and the remarkable ease with which rich imagery and scriptural allusions are multiplied; by their depth of insight into the meaning of Scripture and the workings of God's providence; and, not least of all, by their earnestness and moral force, which issue from the heart of a blameless and guileless man who lived first what he preached to others. Because of his fame, he was chosen to succeed Saint Nectarius as Patriarch of Constantinople. He was taken away by stealth, to avoid the opposition of the people, and consecrated Patriarch of Constantinople on February 28, 398, by Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, who was to prove his mortal enemy.

At that time the Emperor of the East was Arcadius, who had had Saint Arsenius the Great as his tutor; Arcadius was a man of weak character, and much under the influence of his wife Eudoxia. The zealous and upright Chrysostom's unsparing censures of the lax morals in the

imperial city stung the vain Eudoxia; through Theophilus' plottings and her collaboration, Saint John was banished to Pontus in 403. The people were in an uproar, and the following night an earthquake shook the city; this so frightened the Empress Eudoxia that she begged Arcadius to call Chrysostom back. While his return was triumphant, his reconciliation with the Empress did not last long. When she had a silver statue of herself erected in the forum before the Church of the Holy Wisdom (Saint Sophia) in September of 403, and had it dedicated with much unseemly revelry, Saint John thundered against her, and she could not forgive him.

In June of 404 he was exiled to Cucusus, on the borders of Cilicia and Armenia. From here he exchanged letters with Pope Innocent of Rome, who sent bishops and priests to Constantinople requesting that a council be held. Saint John's enemies, dreading his return, prevailed upon the Emperor to see an insult in this, and had John taken to a more remote place of banishment called Pityus near the Caucasus. The journey was filled with bitter sufferings for the aged bishop, both because of the harshness of the elements and the cruelty of one of his 310 guards. He did not reach Pityus, but gave up his soul to the Lord near Comana in Pontus, at the chapel of the Martyr Basiliscus, who had appeared to him shortly before, foretelling the day of his death, which came to pass on September 14, 407. His last words were "Glory be to God for all things." His holy relics were brought from Comana to Constantinople thirty-one years later by the Emperor Theodosius the Younger and Saint Pulcheria his sister, the children of Arcadius and Eudoxia, with fervent supplications that the sin of their parents against him be forgiven; this return of his holy relics is celebrated on January 27.

Saint John was surnamed Chrysostom ("Golden-mouth") because of his eloquence. He made exhaustive commentaries on the divine Scriptures and was the author of more works than any other Church Father, leaving us complete commentaries on the Book of Genesis, the Gospels of Saints Matthew and John, the Acts, and all the Epistles of Saint Paul. His extant works are 1,447 sermons and 240 epistles. Twenty-two teachers of the Church have written homilies of praise in his honour. Besides his feasts today and on January 27, he is celebrated as one of the Three Hierarchs on January 30, together with Saint Basil the Great and Saint Gregory the Theologian.

THE YEAR OF MERCY

Holy Doors to Close Sunday, November 13

Today, on Sunday, November 13 the Year of Mercy comes to a close in all local (*sui iuris*) churches throughout the world and the next Sunday, November 20 the Year of Mercy will come to a close in the Catholic Church.

While the Year of Mercy comes to a close let's keep our hearts open to the needs of people who feel forgotten, abandoned and overlooked in their needs. "*Since love has no boundaries, acts of mercy have to go out and meet poor people, regardless of their nationality,*

social status, religious affiliation or political preferences. Let all who meet us through our sincere interest in them, good words and effective help, feel the presence of the Merciful Father”.

Prayer: O Lord, compassionate and loving, long-suffering and most merciful! Hear our prayer and listen to the voice of our supplication. Show us a sign of Your mercy, guide us along Your ways that we may live in Your truth. Gladden our hearts that we may fear Your holy name, for You are great and You perform wondrous deeds. You are the only God and none other is like You, O Lord. You are great in mercy and able, in Your power, to assist, support, and save all those who place their hope in Your holy name. Therefore, O Almighty and Merciful God, we hasten to You now, and with heartfelt emotion we beseech You: Open the doors of Your mercy to us! Pour out on us and on our entire community the fullness of Your gifts. Guide us in the way of truth and love, and grant that we may be a living instrument and efficacious sign of Your merciful and gracious presence in the world!

**Please join us for Moleben as we are closing the Year of Mercy,
on Thursday, Nov. 17 @ 7PM**

NEWS

In Canada, assisted suicide could also kill Catholic healthcare

Only months after the Canadian Parliament approved legal assisted suicide, Catholic hospitals, palliative care centres and individual doctors have been put on the defensive amid calls to require them to help patients kill themselves.

Five doctors have filed a legal challenge against the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario for its policy that requires doctors who refuse to participate in assisted suicide and abortion to refer those patients to other doctors.

“In my view, it’s the future of Catholic healthcare that’s at stake,” said their spokesman, Larry Worthen. “No other jurisdiction outside of Canada where assisted suicide is legal requires referral.”

He said the college has been “extremely aggressive” in its handling of their case. The doctors are being cross-examined about their religious beliefs. One is Catholic, while four are evangelical Christians.

The college has authority to regulate the practice of medicine in the Ontario province. Refusal to comply with its policies could cost a doctor his or her medical license.

The doctors have the support of the Christian Medical and Dental Society of Canada, the Canadian Federation of Catholic Physicians' Societies and Canadian Physicians for Life, though they face increasing legal costs, Canadian Catholic News reports.

The Attorney General of Ontario has sided with the college, with a spokesperson deeming its policy “a reasonable balance between the sincerely held religious beliefs of objecting physicians and the important state interest in ensuring vulnerable patients are able to access legally available medical procedures.”

The three doctors' groups are part of the new organization called Coalition for HealthCARE and Conscience, which includes the Catholic archdioceses of Toronto and Vancouver.

Bishop Ronald Fabbro of London, who is president of the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, said the province's bishops have agreed to make conscience protection a top priority.

The Canadian parliament legalized assisted suicide in June on orders from Canada's Supreme Court.

In British Columbia, a local health authority suggested requiring that all publicly funded institutions provide assisted suicide services, including Catholic hospitals and hospice care. Archbishop J. Michael Miller of Vancouver wrote in protest of the proposal.

The proposal followed strong criticism of a Catholic hospital in Vancouver that transferred an elderly man in severe pain to another hospital because it would not provide assisted suicide.

Ian Shearer, 84, suffered multiple afflictions, including a spinal condition and sepsis. In late August he requested a doctor-assisted suicide at St. Paul's Hospital in Vancouver, which does not provide assisted suicide because it is Catholic.

Shearer was transferred to a hospital about 2.5 miles away. His daughter Jan Lackie alleged that the trip and inadequate pain control put him in agony.

The ambulance arrived three hours late. In order to ensure he was mentally lucid to give legal consent to assisted suicide, his pain drug dosage had been reduced. According to Lackie, there was also a shortage of the narcotic drug in his ward. She added that she wanted religious-operated facilities, like hospitals, nursing homes and hospices, to be required to allow assisted suicide.

“We have nine judges who said ‘Yes’ to medical assistance in dying,” she said. “I don't understand how the Vatican has so much power, even here in Canada.”

Shaf Hussain, a spokesman for the hospital's parent group Providence Health Care, said the health care group finalized a policy this summer that arranges to transfer patients as comfortably as possible when they voice a desire for assisted suicide.

"We'll be working with our partners in the health care system to ensure the patients' needs do come first ... and to minimize the discomfort and pain," he said.

St. Paul's Hospital does not host the medical assessment or the signing of consent forms required by the assisted suicide law.

"Life is sacred and the dignity of the person is important," Michael Shea, president of the Catholic Alliance for Canada, told the National Post. "These organizations neither prolong dying nor hasten death, and that's a pretty fundamental value for them."

Shanaaz Gokool, who heads the pro-assisted suicide group Dying with Dignity, charged that facilities that do not provide assisted suicide cause suffering for transferred patients and deny them a right to a legal procedure in places where faith-based health care organizations are the only provider.

"This is going to be a real issue, and it's going to be a real issue across the country," Gokool said.

The Canadian newspaper the Catholic Register in an Oct. 13 editorial drew a warning from the controversy. "What is playing out in Vancouver is just the beginning," it said. "Catholic and other faith-based institutions across Canada will face increasing public and political pressure to set aside religious and conscience objections to facilitate assisted suicide."

The editorial noted that organ transplants and other surgeries are routinely referred to other hospitals, and Catholic hospitals are not forced to perform abortions.

"But the assisted-suicide lobby offers no such hint of religious tolerance or accommodation when it comes to their issue," the Catholic Register said.

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