



A Petition to the Canadian Bishops to Retract the *Winnipeg Statement*

"Contraception is to be judged objectively so profoundly unlawful, as never to be, for any reason, justified. To think or to say the contrary is equal to maintaining that in human life, situations may arise in which it is lawful not to recognize God as God."

(Pope John Paul II, quoted in L'Osservatore Romano, Oct.10, 1983)

Your Eminences, Your Graces, and Your Excellencies,

As you know, the contraceptive mentality pervades the Catholic Church in Canada. Most Catholic couples of child-bearing age are preventing children through sterilization or contraception. The birthrate is suicidal. The death of the Church is certain where contraception prevails. It has been truly said that "Our greatest moral responsibility is to convert the contraceptive mentality".

Contraception is the root of which many spiritual evils are the fruit: abortion, infidelity, divorce, pre-marital sex, acceptance of homosexual activity, the clamor for same-sex "marriage" and the corruption of politics and the media. These inevitably follow when, on a large scale, sexual activity is deliberately diverted from its life-giving purpose to sterile lustful indulgence.

Because moral and social disaster does not occur in a vacuum without the Church's involvement, it must be acknowledged that, in Canada, the contraceptive mentality was fostered by the *Winnipeg Statement* of the Canadian bishops published on September 27, 1968. **In that Statement, Catholics were told that in some circumstances spouses "may be safely assured that, whoever chooses that course [i.e. contraception] which seems right to him does so in good conscience"** (26). This teaching is against charity, justice and the truth. It is in contradiction to the constant teaching of the Church that contraception is an intrinsic evil permitting of no exceptions (*Humanae Vitae*, 14). Countless Catholics have referred to the *Winnipeg Statement* in justification of their contraceptive practice.

To restore in Canada the truth about life and love we ask that the *Winnipeg Statement* be revoked by you, our spiritual shepherds. We ask that all marriage preparation courses, all catechetical texts and teaching, preaching, and confessional advice be in accordance with *Humanae Vitae*, given to us with the authority of Christ (HV,6).

Such action on the part of a national hierarchy would not be unprecedented. In 1990, the bishops of the Philippines issued a pastoral letter in which they apologized for their failure to promote the Church's teaching on contraception. They said: "We abandoned you to your confused and lonely consciences with a lame excuse: 'follow what your conscience tells you'. How little did we realize that it was our consciences that needed to be formed first."

In the United States, the U.S. Conference of Bishops, in their November 2003 meeting, voted in favor of issuing a strong document explaining why contraception is wrong. It will be widely distributed in parish pamphlet racks and taught in high schools and colleges. Bishop Gregory, President of the American Bishops' Conference said: "In many respects we haven't spoken clearly enough, effectively enough, frequently enough. If anything, the actions we are taking today are very much needed and, many would say, even late."

While the undersigned earnestly petition for the withdrawal of the *Winnipeg Statement*, we assure you, our bishops, of our constant prayers. Although our obedience and fidelity are assured, our pleas for retraction will continue year after year, if necessary, until the Bishops of Canada retract this Statement. And our movement, because it is founded on the divine law of love and faith, will only increase in strength. One day the *Winnipeg Statement* will fall. Although its end is inevitable, we pray that its retraction comes sooner rather than later.

May God bless you, the Holy Spirit guide you and Mary intercede for you in your apostolic mission.

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