

Later this month, on September 21, Members of Parliament will continue debate on Motion 312, proposed by Mr. Stephen Woodworth, MP. A few days later, on September 26, they are scheduled to vote on the motion. It calls for the House of Commons to form a special committee which would review a statement in the Criminal Code of Canada that “a child becomes a human being only at the moment of complete birth.” Article 223 (1) of the Code reads: “A child becomes a human being within the meaning of this Act when it has completely proceeded, in a living state, from the body of its mother.” The official and complete text of Motion 312 is found on the website of the Parliament of Canada at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&DocId=5437818>

The Catholic Church holds that a human being comes into existence at conception. The lives of human beings are, therefore, sacred at every stage in our existence -- from beginning to natural end. “Blessed is the fruit of your womb,” the Gospel of Luke says in reference to Mary, who was pregnant with child, Our Lord.

As the House of Commons prepares to debate Motion 312, the Bishops of Canada invite all members of the Parliament of Canada to take into full account the sacredness of the unborn child and each human life. We also encourage Canadian Catholics, and all people of good will, to pray that our legislators be blessed with wisdom and courage to do what is best to protect and further the common good, which is based on respect for the human dignity of all.

+Richard Smith

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