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10 February 2010

Dear Jack

I am writing to express my concern about the Surrogacy Bill 2009 about to be debated.

While I understand some of the concerns behind the Bill, I believe that if the Bill seeks to address all requests it may do more harm than good.

As was made clear in our submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry, the Catholic Church does not object to decriminalising altruistic surrogacy as regards the surrogate mother and the commissioning parents. However, as you are aware, this Bill goes further than simply decriminalising surrogacy. There is a real concern that it is shaped largely for adults, without equal concern for surrogate children and their future.

The Catholic Church finds it difficult to support legislation which places a child in a situation where there is no mother and father as would normally be expected. It is difficult to know in advance the impact such legislation may have on children, or the damage it may do to the institution of the family which is the foundation of our society.

In a statement made in Rome only this week Pope Benedict XVI said to the Pontifical Council for the Family (LifeSite News, 8 Feb. 2010):

“The best chance children have of developing properly is found in a family because of the uniquely complementary roles played by husband and wife... they need to dwell, grow and live with both parents, because the maternal and paternal figures complement one another in the education of children and the formation of their personality and identity. It is important, then, that everything possible be done to ensure they grow up in a united and stable family.”

As you exercise your conscience vote on this issue I ask you to think of the wellbeing of all children. My good wishes and prayers go with you as you prepare to make enormously important decisions.

With every best wish,

Yours sincerely

Most Rev. John A Bathersby
ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP OF BRISBANE