

3 June 2005

The Right Honourable Paul Martin, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Langevin Bldg.  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A2

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

According to recent news reports, the Government of Canada is planning to rush Bill C-38 through the House of Commons before the end of this month.

The Roman and Eastern Catholic Bishops of Canada, as the spiritual leaders of 13 million Catholics in this country, deplore this move.

Canadians are deeply divided on Bill C-38. This is not the moment to rush into legislation which has such enormous social and legal consequences. Continued reflection, research, study and discussion are needed in order to ensure the best for our society and for children, who are its future.

Together with millions of other Canadians of all faiths and no religious faith, the Catholic Bishops of Canada remain deeply concerned about the impact that Bill C-38 will have on society, both in terms of altering the significance of marriage and also in terms of the challenges that are already being posed to the basic freedoms of conscience and religion, as well as to freedom of expression.

On behalf of my episcopal confreres and in my own name, I respectfully request an explanation about why your government is determined to rush such legislation.

Sincerely,

Most Reverend Brendan M. O'Brien  
Archbishop of St. John's  
President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops