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The Gift of Life

Dear friends,

I want to share with you the attitude of John Paul II and the example of Benedict XVI regarding the medical possibility of organ and tissue donation.

“Every organ donation for the health of well-being of another is ‘a gesture which is a genuine act of love’” writes Pope John Paul II. Obviously, he views organ and tissue donation, not merely as medical procedure but an authentic expression of Christian Charity.

When asked by a reporter if he was registered with a association of donors, Pope Benedict, then Cardinal Ratzinger responded, “Yes, I registered years ago and I always carry this document with me; in addition to personal data, it states that I offer my organs to help whomever is in need. It is simply an act of love.”

Today in Ontario, more than 1700 men, women and children are waiting for a life-saving organ transplant. Every one of us regardless of age is a potential donor and each donor can potentially save the lives of 7 or more people.

The decision to become an organ donor is truly a family decision. When a person dies it is the decision of the family that will decide whether a donation happens or not.

From the attitude and example of Popes John Paul II and Benedict, I exhort families to see organ and tissue donation as an act of love and choose to help others now, by making time to speak to their beloved friends and family about their wishes and consider giving the gift of life.

Sincerely yours in Christ

Most Reverend Richard Grecco
Auxiliary Bishop, Toronto