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**Statement from Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto,
on the October 10, 2008 ceremony formally recognizing Henry Morgentaler
as a member of the Order of Canada**

October 9, 2008

Tomorrow, our Governor General will preside at a ceremony in which Henry Morgentaler will formally be received into the Order of Canada. This is a sad moment in Canadian history.

The Order of Canada was created to recognize the outstanding achievements of citizens who have desired and helped to create a better country. Is a country made better when those who are most vulnerable are not allowed to continue their brief experience of the precious gift of life itself?

He is being received into the Order of Canada despite the opposition of hundreds of thousands of Canadians. This action divides our country. It does not unite.

This ceremony is taking place as we are entering into the celebration of Thanksgiving, when loved ones will gather with their families across this nation. Around dining room tables this weekend, let us reflect deeply, and remember that while no one of us was ever a mere part of another's body, each one of us was, at one time, the precious unborn baby in our mother's womb. Let each of us thank God that our personal journey was not terminated. This is no abstract issue. Nothing affects you or me more profoundly. After all, you and I are here to give thanks on this Thanksgiving Day.

As I stated when this announcement was first made in July, I appeal to all of those who have suffered through an abortion, or who feel pressured to seek this path. The Archdiocese of Toronto website www.archtoronto.org continues to offer information which will guide you along a path that leads to life and inner peace. There are many people who are eager to listen to you, to love you, and to help you.

I ask that this Sunday be a day of special prayer throughout the Archdiocese of Toronto. We will, once again, offer this prayer at every Sunday Mass:

"That the scourge of abortion be lifted from our land, that those who promote it may be brought to a change of heart, that all who are tempted to abortion may be lovingly helped to protect the precious gift of life, and that all who have experienced an abortion may be comforted with the healing gift of love."
