



Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador

February 25, 2016

The Honourable Yvonne Jones
Member of Parliament – Labrador
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Ms. Jones,

I am writing you today as the Spiritual Leader of many of your constituents, to express to you some of my concerns regarding the Supreme Court's decision in *Carter vs. Canada* and to share with you some reflections that I hope will be helpful to you in your role as a Member of Parliament at this time when our Government is discerning how best to deal with the legal ramifications of that decision.

It is the teaching of the Catholic Church that the intentional, willful act of killing oneself or another human being is morally wrong. This position is informed not only by our faith and tradition but also by reason. It is a position that is commonly shared by other faith groups, medical professionals and people opposed to the killing of those most vulnerable. When any life can be taken at will, the dignity of all lives is seriously eroded and respect for human life in general is diminished.

The experience of those nations and states which have legalized euthanasia and assisted suicide indicates that efforts to limit this practise to particular cases is inevitably challenged and rejected in favour of more liberal and widespread access. The so-called "right" very quickly and easily turns into a "duty to die" on the part of the handicapped, the elderly, the chronically ill, the depressed, and the dying, and a "duty to kill" on the part of physicians, medical professionals and healthcare workers.

The implementation of the Supreme Court's decision calling for the legalization of physician-assisted suicide would have drastic negative effects on our country. Quite possibly the best option available to our legislature in protecting our country from these negative effects would be to invoke the not-withstanding clause as provided by Section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Human Rights.

A great deal of the discussion around euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide is centred on the concepts of compassion, dignity and the alleviation of pain. The Latin root of the word compassion is "to suffer with". The availability of palliative care and professional counselling are ways that a compassionate and caring society reaches out to support the dignity and alleviate the pain of its suffering members. Supporting them with the help they need to live well, rather than assisting them in killing themselves, is the type of society that Canada is meant to be.

In closing, I thank you for the important work you do for the people of your riding, as their elected Member of Parliament. Please know that I and the people of this diocese are praying for God's blessings upon you and upon all the Members of Parliament; that in dealing with this important issue, and all the issues before you, you may have the wisdom to know what to do and the courage necessary to do it.

Yours sincerely,

(Most Reverend) Peter Hundt
Bishop of Corner Brook and Labrador



Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador

February 25, 2016

The Honourable Gudie Hutchings
Member of Parliament – Long Range Mountains
49-51 Park Street
Corner Brook, Newfoundland
A2H 2X1

Dear Ms. Hutchings,

I am writing you today both as a constituent and as the Spiritual Leader of many other of your constituents, to express to you some of my concerns regarding the Supreme Court's decision in *Carter vs. Canada* and to share with you some reflections that I hope will be helpful to you in your role as our Member of Parliament at this time when our Government is discerning how best to deal with the legal ramifications of that decision.

It is the teaching of the Catholic Church that the intentional, willful act of killing oneself or another human being is morally wrong. This position is informed not only by our faith and tradition but also by reason. It is a position that is commonly shared by other faith groups, medical professionals and people opposed to the killing of those most vulnerable. When any life can be taken at will, the dignity of all lives is seriously eroded and respect for human life in general is diminished.

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In closing, I thank you for the important work you do for us, the people of this riding, as our elected Member of Parliament. Please know that I and the people of this diocese are praying for God's blessings upon you and upon all the Members of Parliament; that in dealing with this important issue, and all the issues before you, you may have the wisdom to know what to do and the courage necessary to do it.

Yours sincerely,

(Most Reverend) Peter Hundt
Bishop of Corner Brook and Labrador