



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Mr. Rob Nicholson
Member of Parliament
2895 St. Paul Avenue, Unit 11
Niagara Falls, Ontario L2J 2L3

February 10, 2016

Dear Mr. Nicholson,

As bishop of the Diocese of St. Catharines and a citizen of our great nation, I write to you to express my concerns about the Supreme Court's decision *Carter vs. Canada* and the forthcoming legislation. I worry that this ruling will have a negative impact and place those who are most vulnerable in our society at greater risk. This is especially true of children, the elderly, the handicapped and those chronically ill. I offer a few thoughts for your consideration.

A great deal of the discussion around euthanasia and doctor assisted suicide is framed by the concepts of compassion and dignity. When someone is suffering we are called to be compassionate and this is often defined as doing something to stop the suffering. This is a characteristic of compassion but not its essence. The Latin root of the word means to "suffer with". Those who advocate for euthanasia and doctor assisted suicide often limit compassion reducing it to simply alleviating pain and suffering. I am compassionate when I feel with the person their pain and suffering and support them in love reminding them that they are not alone and that someone does care about them. A significant part of that support is pain management. Palliative care is about relieving pain and giving the person the best quality of life. A compassionate person will ensure that a person who is suffering receives palliative care. Here the focus is on life not death.

Dying with dignity is a good that everyone would naturally desire; however, people understand the term differently. Those who support euthanasia and doctor assisted suicide would argue that dignity is found in giving people the right to choose life or death. Dignity is not simply about control; it is about care. A good deal of support for euthanasia and doctor assisted suicide comes from those who naturally fear suffering and a loss of dignity. Palliative care helps allay those fears by controlling pain and providing emotional support in a warm and loving environment. It is also important to remember that persons receiving care are not obliged to seek treatment when it is of no benefit, or when the burdens resulting from treatment are clearly disproportionate to the benefits hoped for or obtained. This also respects the person's dignity as treatment is not forced on them.

The Christian faith teaches us that all life is sacred and that it is never permissible to take a person's life or to assist them in taking their own life. We also know that to suffer with the person is true compassion and this motivates us to do all that is medically possible to alleviate the physical pain. Rather than support a right to die let us support a right to care for the person that brings meaning, love and life. I hope and pray that these are the values that our government will use when considering the complex end-of-life issues facing our country today.

With kind regards, I remain

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D.
Bishop of St. Catharines

P.O. Box 875, St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada L2R 6Z4
905-684-0154 • Fax: 905-684-7551
Email: bishop@stcatharinesdiocese.ca



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Ms. Diane Finley
Member of Parliament
76 Kent Street, South
Simcoe, ON N3Y 2Y1

February 10, 2016

Dear Ms. Finley,

As bishop of the Diocese of St. Catharines and a citizen of our great nation, I write to you to express my concerns about the Supreme Court's decision *Carter vs. Canada* and the forthcoming legislation. I worry that this ruling will have a negative impact and place those who are most vulnerable in our society at greater risk. This is especially true of children, the elderly, the handicapped and those chronically ill. I offer a few thoughts for your consideration.

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Mr. Dean Allison
Member of Parliament
4994 King Street
Beamsville, Ontario L0R 1B0

February 10, 2016

Dear Mr. Allison,

As bishop of the Diocese of St. Catharines and a citizen of our great nation, I write to you to express my concerns about the Supreme Court's decision *Carter vs. Canada* and the forthcoming legislation. I worry that this ruling will have a negative impact and place those who are most vulnerable in our society at greater risk. This is especially true of children, the elderly, the handicapped and those chronically ill. I offer a few thoughts for your consideration.

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Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D.
Bishop of St. Catharines



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Mr. Vance Badawey
Member of Parliament
136 East Main Street, Suite 103
Welland, Ontario L3B 3W6

February 10, 2016

Dear Mr. Badawey,

As bishop of the Diocese of St. Catharines and a citizen of our great nation, I write to you to express my concerns about the Supreme Court's decision *Carter vs. Canada* and the forthcoming legislation. I worry that this ruling will have a negative impact and place those who are most vulnerable in our society at greater risk. This is especially true of children, the elderly, the handicapped and those chronically ill. I offer a few thoughts for your consideration.

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+ *Gerard Bergie*

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Mr. Chris Bittle
Member of Parliament
61 Geneva Street, Unit 1
St. Catharines, Ontario L2M 4M6

February 10, 2016

Dear Mr. Bittle,

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