



STATEMENT BY THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR FAMILY AND LIFE

**TO THE CATHOLIC FAITHFUL IN CANADA AND
ALL PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL**

**VOICING CONCERN AND CALLING FOR PRAYERS
ON THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF
EUTHANASIA AND ASSISTED SUICIDE (“MAID”)**

On June 17, 2026, a decade will have passed since Bill C-14 received Royal Assent, legalizing euthanasia and assisted suicide across Canada, and permitting eligible adults, under specified conditions, to access what is legally termed “Medical Assistance in Dying” (“MAID”). As we mark this sobering anniversary, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops’ (CCCBC) Standing Committee for Family and Life invites the Catholic faithful and all people of goodwill to voice renewed concern about “MAID,” to remain steadfast in opposing euthanasia and assisted suicide, to pray for the conversion of hearts and minds away from this practice, and to be present to persons who are sick and vulnerable.

Canada now has “the world’s largest and fastest-growing euthanasia program.”¹ The percentage of “MAID” deaths is increasing annually and accounts for 5.1% of all deaths in 2024 (or 16,499 Canadians).² Since its legalization, an estimated 100,000 Canadians have died by euthanasia or assisted suicide.³ Grave concern is warranted regarding the continued expansion of the eligibility criteria for “MAID,” which puts increasing numbers of Canadians at risk. In 2016, only individuals whose death was “reasonably foreseeable” were eligible for “MAID” with so-called “safeguards” in place. Subsequent legislation in 2021, however, considerably broadened the criteria, expanding access to include those whose death is *not* reasonably foreseeable, but whose condition is “grievous and irremediable.”⁴

On this occasion, we reject complacency with the status quo on euthanasia in Canada. Formed by the Gospel, we are called to draw near to those who suffer: not to ignore, trivialize, or abandon them in their pain or despair, but to accompany them with compassion, practical care, and hope (cf. *Lk* 10:30-37). We actively seek opportunities for effective, collaborative strategies to provide concrete and compassionate support to those living with serious physical or mental illness, those with disabilities, and those nearing the end of life, as well as their families and caregivers.

As disciples of Christ, we affirm that every human life is a gift, holds profound dignity and value,

¹ Alexander Raikin, “We were promised MAiD would be rare. Instead, Canadian euthanasia deaths are soaring,” *The Hub*, August 21, 2024, <https://thehub.ca/2024/08/21/alexander-raikin-we-were-promised-maid-would-be-rare-instead-canadian-euthanasia-deaths-are-soaring/>.

² Government of Canada, *Sixth Annual Report on Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada*, 2024, “2. MAiD requests and outcomes, updated November 11, 2025, accessed May 15, 2026, <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/health-system-services/annual-report-medical-assistance-dying-2024.html#a2.1>

³ Terry O’Neill, “MAiD at 10: How Assisted Dying Is Reshaping Canada,” *The B.C. Catholic*, April 23, 2024, <https://bccatholic.ca/news/catholic-van/maid-at-10-how-assisted-dying-is-reshaping-canada>.

⁴ Bill C-7, An Act to amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying), 2021.

and is part of a human community (cf. *Mt 25:31-46*). In contrast, euthanasia and assisted suicide, whatever their motives or means, consist in intentionally causing or hastening the death of a person who is sick, suffering, disabled, or dying in order to eliminate suffering. Such acts can never be morally acceptable, for they are gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to God, the Creator and Lord of life.⁵ True compassion does not answer suffering with death, but accompanies those who suffer with hope, presence, palliative care, and relief of pain. Together with healthcare professionals, patients, and families, our faith teaches that we must strive for proportionate treatment options that neither unduly prolong nor intentionally hasten death, but instead offer life-affirming and compassionate care.

On this 10th anniversary, we pray for all those whose lives have been lost to “MAID.” We also pray for their loved ones, many of whom continue to carry grief, confusion, regret, or unanswered questions. We remember those who continue to suffer: the sick, persons with disabilities, the elderly, those living with mental illness, those nearing the end of life, and all who experience loneliness, fear, or despair. We renew our call to “give witness at the side of the sick person and to become a ‘healing community’ in order to actualize concretely the desire of Jesus that, beginning with the most weak and vulnerable, all may be one flesh.”⁶ Even in suffering, illness, dependence, and frailty, human life retains its God-given dignity and capacity for love, communion, and grace.

We give thanks to the many dioceses, eparchies, parishes, organizations, healthcare workers, families, and volunteers who, over the past 10 years, have promoted Christian hope in the face of illness and death and have resisted “MAID” with courage and compassion. Their witness reminds us that defending life is not only a public teaching, but also a daily work of presence: visiting the sick, supporting caregivers, accompanying those in despair, advocating for the vulnerable, and helping build communities where no one feels they must face suffering alone.

In this moment of sober reflection, prayer, and renewed responsibility, we call the Catholic faithful to pray for those who are sick, suffering, isolated, or nearing the end of life; for their families, caregivers, and healthcare professionals; and for the conversion of hearts and minds toward a culture that receives every life as a gift and never abandons those most in need. The resources below reflect the Church in Canada’s ongoing commitment to building compassionate communities, promoting authentic palliative care, and providing practical support to all who suffer.⁷ May the Church in Canada continue to be a place where people, especially the sick, elderly, disabled, suffering, and dying, are received with love, accompanied with compassion, and reminded that their life remains precious in the eyes of God.

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⁵ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2nd ed. (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), 2277, https://www.vatican.va/content/catechism/en/part_three/section_two/chapter_two/article_5/i_respect_for_human_life.html; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Samaritanus Bonus: On the Care of Persons in the Critical and Terminal Phases of Life* (Vatican City: Holy See, 2020), sec. V, no. 10, <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/09/22/200922a.html>.

⁶ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Samaritanus Bonus: On the Care of Persons in the Critical and Terminal Phases of Life* (Vatican City: Holy See, 2020), sec. V, no. 10, <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2020/09/22/200922a.html>.

⁷ Cf. Pope Francis, Letter to participants, “Towards a Narrative of Hope: An International Interfaith Symposium on Palliative Care,” 21-23 May 2024, https://www.cccb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/2024-Pope-Francis-Message_Symposium_EN-Final.pdf; Cf. Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, “Interfaith Statement on Palliative Care,” June 14, 2016, <https://www.cccb.ca/letter/interfaith-statement-on-palliative-care/>.



PRAYER

**In communion with our Lord, the Great Physician,
let us offer together a prayer of hope, compassion, and vision
towards the promise of everlasting love and life:**

*Loving God,
rock of strength for those
who trust in you;
comforter of those who call on you.
Hear the cry of those who suffer
from sickness or weakness,
and embrace them
in your loving arms.
Give them peace,
and strengthen them
with the vision of your kingdom.
We make this prayer through
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

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CCCB Publications and Resources

- [Horizons of Hope: A Toolkit for Catholic Parishes on Palliative Care, 2019.](#)
- [Statement on the Non-Permissibility of Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide within Canadian Health Organizations with a Catholic Identity, 2023.](#)
- [Towards a Narrative of Hope: An International Interfaith Symposium on Palliative Care, May 2024.](#)
 - [Pope Francis, To the Participants in the Symposium “Towards a Narrative of Hope: An International Interfaith Symposium on Palliative Care”, 2024.](#)
 - [Post-Symposium Statement and Recommendations, 2024.](#)

Canadian Dioceses and Eparchies

- [Archdiocese of Boniface, End-of-Life and Palliative Care](#)
- [Archdiocese of Edmonton, Hope & Dignity](#)
- [Archdiocese of Montreal, Life and its seasons](#)
- [Archdiocese of Toronto, Palliative Care \(End-of-Life Care\)](#)
- [Diocese of Calgary, Horizons of Hope](#)
- [Diocese of Hamilton, Palliative Care Information](#)
- [Diocese of London, Choose Life](#)
- [Diocese of Peterborough, Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide \(brochure\)](#)

- [Diocese of Rimouski, *Soins palliatifs*](#)
- [Diocese of Saskatoon, Anointing of the Sick \(brochure\)](#)
- [Diocese of Victoria, Care of the Dying](#)
- [Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Edmonton, Pastoral Initiative](#)