



Dear Friends in Christ,

May 4, 2016

On February 6, 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada unanimously overturned a legal ban on doctor-assisted suicide. On April 14, 2016, the federal government introduced legislation (Bill C-14) that, if passed, will amend the Criminal Code to make euthanasia/assisted suicide legal in Canada. This legislation is expected to be in place by June 2016.

Thousands of concerned Canadians have contacted their elected officials respectfully expressing their concerns. But now that legislation has been introduced, there is much work to do. We need to act today because:

- The draft federal legislation does not include specific protection of conscience rights for health care workers and institutions that oppose euthanasia/assisted suicide. The draft legislation suggests that this may need to take place at the provincial/territorial level. We need to let both the federal and provincial/territorial governments know that no health care worker, hospital or facility should be forced to provide euthanasia/assisted suicide or arrange for it to take place (i.e. make a referral).
- Until 100% of Canadians have access to quality end of life (palliative) care, there are fears the vulnerable will be at risk in a country where euthanasia/assisted suicide will be seen as another form of health care.
- No foreign jurisdiction in the world that has legalized assisted suicide forces health care workers or facilities to provide euthanasia or arrange for it to take place (i.e. make a referral).

I want to encourage each of you to contact your elected official to urge them to commit to:

- **Ensuring that the federal legislation (Bill C-14) includes protection for health care workers and institutions, guaranteeing that they do not have to provide or refer for euthanasia/assisted suicide.**
- **Ensuring that palliative care and quality support services, as a national priority, will be effectively provided to those in need.**
- **Note: You can find contact information for your Member of Parliament by using your postal code at: www.bit.ly/finlocalmp**
- **You may also want to send your letter to the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Health who are ultimately playing key roles in the drafting of this legislation. Their contact information is:**

The Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
284 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0H8
Email: mcu@justice.gc.ca

The Honourable Jane Philpott
Brooke Claxton Building
Tunney's Pasture
Postal locator 0906C
Ottawa ON K1A 0K9
Email: hon.jane.philpott@canada.ca

I wish to conclude this pastoral letter with a recent message from the Holy Father, Pope Francis:

"Care and concern for the final stages of life is all the more necessary today, when contemporary society attempts to remove any trace of death and dying...Euthanasia and assisted suicide are serious threats to families worldwide." (April 2016)

Sincerely,
Bishop Richard Grecco

