

*A message from Archbishop Weisgerber*

## Legalizing euthanasia and assisted suicide

A Member of Parliament will once again introduce a bill to legalize euthanasia and assisted suicide. It is important in a democracy for everyone to participate in this debate. Members of Parliament represent us, the people and we have to inform them about our positions.

What does euthanasia or assisted suicide not mean? This bill is not about respecting a person's refusal of treatment or request to discontinue treatment, nor about letting someone die naturally by withholding or withdrawing medical treatment when its burdens outweigh its benefits, nor about giving drugs to relieve pain and suffering even if a foreseen but unintended effect is to shorten life. Assisted suicide is helping someone kill himself or herself; euthanasia is ending someone's suffering and pain by killing them.

Our Catholic tradition teaches us that life is a gift from God. We must treasure all life. Certainly sometimes people suffer and suffer terribly, but with the support of family and the community, appropriate pain management and, for the dying, compassionate palliative care, life can be treasured and respected. More and more suffering people in our society find themselves alone, isolated from family and community. Rather than decide to help these suffering people to kill themselves or to do it for them, we, particularly as

disciples of Jesus need to work hard to strengthen family and community life. We need to reach out to those who are suffering and alone.

What can and should we do? Everyone should inform themselves about this issue. The Catholic Organization for

Life and Family has great information about the teaching of our Church. You can access COLF's website at <http://colf.cccb.ca>. Once informed we need to speak to others and crucially, we need to contact our Member of Parliament. A list of the Members of Parliament within the Archdiocese of

Winnipeg, and their contact information, is available by clicking on the link at the end of this article.

We also need to bring this issue to God in prayer.

Respect for and protection of human life is one of the foundational pillars of Canadian society. Let us pray that together we will continue to affirm that life is a gift of God's love and goodness.

Click here for a list of Members of Parliament within the Archdiocese of Winnipeg:

[http://www.archwinnipeg.ca/docs/euthanasia\\_list\\_of\\_mps.pdf](http://www.archwinnipeg.ca/docs/euthanasia_list_of_mps.pdf)

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