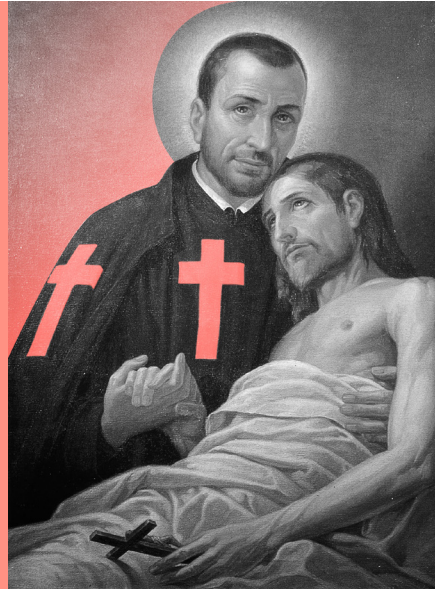


*The poor and the sick
are the heart of God.
In serving them, we
serve Jesus Christ.*

ST. CAMILLUS
DE LELLIS



We have the gift of faith, and by our faith we have hope; we have the abundant love of Christ to share with others. As people of faith we recognize how sharing ourselves with those who are struggling, by visiting and being with them or providing the necessary care they need when going through a difficult time, can be transformative for them (and us), and also life-saving.

The Church refers to caring for the sick as a corporal work of mercy. We can call it protecting life by caring for others.

By visiting, calling and being with those in need we help each other in the struggle, we affirm each person as a gift, we help them find hope and meaning and to say yes to life.



Written by Brother Alex Schadenberg, Life Director, Knights of
Columbus Ontario State Council (lifedirector@ontariokofc.ca)

April 2020

Are You Caring for Others in Their Time of Need?

Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide (MAiD) in Canada

The Canadian government legalized euthanasia and assisted suicide under the term (medical assistance in dying, or MAiD) in June 2016. The legislation claimed to have a series of safeguards to limit the number of deaths and to protect people who are vulnerable.

Euthanasia is performed by a physician or nurse practitioner who lethally injects a person who has requested that death be inflicted upon them and has been determined to fit the criteria of the law.

The social acceptance for euthanasia has grown exponentially whereby in 2019 approximately 5000 Canadians died by euthanasia and since legalization more than 13,000 have died by lethal injection.

In September 2019, a Québec Superior Court decision struck down the “terminal illness” requirement in the law. This decision was not appealed by the government. After the election, the government announced that they would amend Canada’s euthanasia law. To this end, in February (2020), the federal government introduced Bill C-7, which is not limited to the Québec court decision; it also expands the euthanasia law. Bill C-7 expands euthanasia to people who are incompetent but had made an advanced request, eliminates the ten-day waiting period for persons who are deemed to be “terminally ill”, reduces the number of witnesses who need to sign the euthanasia request and creates a new set of rules for euthanasia when someone is not terminally ill or dying.





Photo taken by Michael Swan, *The Catholic Register*

Cardinal Thomas Collins commented on Bill C-7 on February 25, 2020 (read his full statement online at www.archtoronto.org):

... Those who oppose euthanasia expressed concern in 2016, when it was first legalized, that once the state legally provided death for some, it would only be a matter of time before the criteria for that would be expanded. This was dismissed as a slippery slope argument; we were told that “safeguards” would protect the most vulnerable. Now, less than four years later, we are far down the slope, and the criteria for euthanasia have been radically expanded.

There is no longer a requirement that the person receiving euthanasia be terminally ill. Under this legislation, any serious incurable illness, disease, or disability would render one eligible for euthanasia. Additionally, without any further study or direction from the courts, the new legislation would legalize euthanasia where consent is obtained by an advance directive. This is a new chapter of death on demand. Canada has cast aside restrictions at a far quicker pace than any other jurisdiction in the world that has legalized euthanasia.

Cardinal Collins also focused on the need for a caring culture:

[...] Where is the political will to push forward on palliative care for all Canadians? Only 30 per cent of Canadians have access to quality palliative care even though we know that pain and loneliness are among the biggest fears of those who are suffering. Palliative care can address these issues. If all Canadians had access to quality palliative care, fewer would seek lethal injection. Instead of developing an overall culture of care, we are rushing towards death on demand. The same doctors who are trying to care for their patients will now be called on to endorse euthanasia for them.

The Cardinal writes about the lack of commitment to palliative care by our Canadian governments. He is rightfully concerned. Another problem is the pressure that governments are placing on palliative care institutions to provide euthanasia (MAiD). Euthanasia is contrary to the philosophy of palliative care.

It is important to recognize that euthanasia is a threat to EVERY life, even your life and mine. We all experience suffering in varied physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual ways. It is normal for those who are experiencing physical suffering to also suffer from emotional, psychological and spiritual distress. It is normal for a person, at a difficult time of their life, to become depressed, to feel like a burden on others, and to have feelings of hopelessness and a loss of purpose. These are normal feelings, that, when expressed, could be misconstrued as a request for euthanasia.

