



**STATEMENT ON BILL C-14
BY THE CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS**

Today, the Government of Canada has introduced Bill C-14, *An Act to amend the Criminal Code and to make related amendments to other Acts (medical assistance in dying)*. This proposed legislation, which responds to the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in early 2015, will make euthanasia and assisted suicide legal and more accessible in our entire country. The Supreme Court decision and current legislative efforts are in stark contradiction to the endeavours of individuals, families and communities to counteract the dangers and sufferings of suicide – as we have seen this week in Attawapiskat, Ontario.

The teaching of the Catholic Church and the stance of the Catholic Bishops of Canada affirm the sacredness and dignity of human life. Suicide and euthanasia are contrary to the most profound natural inclination of each human being to live and preserve life. Furthermore, they contradict the fundamental responsibility that human beings have to protect one another and to enhance the quality of health and social care which every human life deserves, from conception to natural death.

Bill C-14, no matter how it may be amended, is an affront to human dignity, an erosion of human solidarity, and a danger to all vulnerable persons -- particularly the aged, disabled, infirm and sick who so often find themselves isolated and marginalized. Moreover, it is a violation of the sacrosanct duty of healthcare providers to heal, and the responsibility of legislators and citizens to assure and provide protection for all, especially those persons most at risk.

As our country faces this new moral and social threat, the Bishops of Canada renew their call to federal, provincial and territorial legislators to consistently defend and protect the lives of all, to renew efforts to guarantee accessible home care and palliative care, and to protect the conscience rights of healthcare providers and agencies refusing to be part of euthanasia and assisted suicide.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
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