



ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD
134 FARMINGTON AVENUE
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
06105-3784

OFFICE OF
THE ARCHBISHOP

March 9, 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Recently a very compelling article was written by Father Walter Nagle in the neighboring diocese of Norwich. Entitled "Life is Beautiful," it tells the recent story of his own mother's illness and death in light of the attempt that is being made to introduce assisted suicide legislation in Connecticut. I encourage you to read the article at www.norwichdiocese.org/religious-liberty.html.

"What I and others learned," Fr. Nagle writes, "is that suffering can bring out the best in people... [My mother's] suffering brought out heroic love in those who cared for her. ...All she had was love...and that love transformed everyone around her."

"The argument is often made that no one should have to suffer uselessly. These days with advances in Palliative Care, physical pain can be treated. In fact the father of Palliative Care in North America, Dr. Balfour Mount, himself a cancer survivor, is vigorously opposed to a Physician Assisted Suicide Bill in Quebec. So is Jean Vanier, founder of L'Arche, a community of people with mental disabilities. Both...can see the dignity of the human person beneath the outer appearance of physical or mental illness. It is argued that there will be strict provisions on who can qualify and who cannot. This is very subjective. Where does the medical community draw the line on what types of pain qualify for life ending medication, and which ones don't? It is like trying to compare grief. You cannot. It is personal. So is pain. ...Instead of focusing efforts on how we can terminate a life under the guise of words like "Compassion" and "Choice" shouldn't we build up a community of caring people who can be the hands and feet to build up the most vulnerable in our population?"

"Belgium has passed an assisted suicide law that allows for children of any age with a terminal illness to receive life ending medication. An op-ed piece in the LA Times lauded the decision and recommended that such laws be passed in the US. Do you see the slippery slope that Physician Assisted Suicide brings? By their logic if you can take the life of an adult why not administer life ending medication to children? You see how acceptance of Physician Assisted Suicide opens a Pandora's box of other evils.... There has been Assisted Suicide in Oregon for 11 years. A Doctor from Oregon has testified that there is not ONE documented case of a person dying with uncontrollable pain. In that period the suicide rate has increased by 40%."

The words of Father Nagle are compelling because they speak from his personal experience as a son. As we Bishops have pointed out, "physician-assisted suicide does not promote compassion because its focus is not on eliminating suffering, but on eliminating the patient. Most people facing a devastating illness are usually seeking true compassion, loving care, family support and quality pain control. Instead of enacting a law that opens the door to potential abuse of the elderly, disabled and seriously ill, we as a society should work on refining and improving the existing system of palliative and hospice care for those facing a serious and life threatening illness." Together with members of the health care community and those representing the elderly and disabled, the Bishops strongly oppose the legislation being put forward in Connecticut.

Please contact your State Representative and State Senator, and members of the Public Health Committee in particular, and urge them to say "No" to H.B. 5326 "*An Act Concerning Compassionate Aid in Dying for Terminally Ill Patients.*" See the contact information on the back of this letter. If possible, attend the public hearing to show your opposition to this legislation. And let's not forget the spiritual weapons at our disposal, namely, our Lenten fasting and prayer for this intention.

Thank you and God bless you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Leonard P. Blair
Archbishop of Hartford

*Please contact the Members of the Public Health Committee
in addition to your State Senator and Representative
and urge them to*

Vote “NO” on House Bill 5326

**Let them know you do not support
Physician-Assisted Suicide**

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE:

Senators: Democrats (D) 800-842-1420 Republicans (R) 800-842-1421

Terry Gerratana (D) (Co-Chair)	Email: Gerratana@senatedems.ct.gov
Gayle Slossberg (D)	Slossberg@senatedems.ct.gov
Anthony Musto (D)	Musto@senatedems.ct.gov
Jason Welch (R)	Jason.Welch@cga.ct.gov
Robert Kane (R)	Rob.Kane@cga.ct.gov

Representatives: Democrats (D) 800-842-8267 Republicans (R) 800-842-1423

Susan Johnson (D) (Co-Chair)	Email: Susan.Johnson@cga.ct.gov
Philip Miller (D)	Philip.Miller@cga.ct.gov
David Alexander (D)	David.Alexander@cga.ct.gov
David Arconti (D)	David.Arconti@cga.ct.gov
Michelle Cook (D)	Michelle.Cook@cga.ct.gov
Theresa Conroy (D)	Theresa.Conroy@cga.ct.gov
Mike Demicco (D)	Mike.Demicco@cga.ct.gov
James Maroney (D)	James.Maroney@cga.ct.gov
Emmett Riley (D)	Emmett.Riley@cga.ct.gov
Kevin Ryan (D)	Kevin.Ryan@cga.ct.gov
Peggy Sayers (D)	Peggy.Sayers@cga.ct.gov
Peter Tercyak (D)	Peter.Tercyak@cga.ct.gov
Patricia Widlitz (D)	Patricia.Widlitz@cga.ct.gov
David Zoni (D)	David.Zoni@cga.ct.gov
Prasad Srinivasan (R)	Prasad.Srinivasan@housegop.ct.gov
Whit Betts (R)	Whit.Betts@housegop.ct.gov
Christopher Davis (R)	Christopher.Davis@housegop.ct.gov
DebraLee Hovey (R)	DebraLee.Hovey@housegop.ct.gov
Themis Klarides (R)	Themis.Klarides@housegop.ct.gov
Jason Perillo (R)	Jason.Perillo@housegop.ct.gov
David Scribner (R)	David.Scribner@housegop.ct.gov
Melissa Ziobron (R)	Melissa.Ziobron@housegop.ct.gov

Call your State Senator –

If your State Senator is a Democrat call	1-800-842-1420
If your State Senator is a Republican call	1-800-842-1421

Call your State Representative –

If your State Representative is a Democrat call	1-800-842-8267
If your State Representative is a Republican call	1-800-842-1423

For more information on this issue, visit the Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs website at www.ctcatholic.org. If you need assistance identifying your State Senator or Representative, please contact the Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference at 860-524-7882.