



EUTHANASIA AND ASSISTED SUICIDE : SYMPTOMS OF A CULTURE OF DEATH

IT IS TIME TO STAND UP AND SPEAK UP!

- **WOULD YOU LIKE** to live in a society that allows some citizens to kill others or to help them commit suicide? Would you like medical students – those who will soon be your doctors – to learn not only how to heal, but how to kill? Would you like to wonder one day, as you enter the hospital: “Will they treat me or kill me?”
- **THESE PERSPECTIVES MAKE YOU SHUDDER?** It is time, then, to join the thousands of Canadians who have decided to speak up after considering two alarming events which lead us straight in that direction.
- **DID YOU, KNOW** that, on June 15, 2012, a judge from the Supreme Court of British Columbia ruled that the law prohibiting assisted suicide is unconstitutional? She gave Canadian Parliament one year to draft legislation allowing euthanasia and assisted suicide.
- **DID YOU KNOW** that, on March 22, 2012, the Select Committee on Dying with Dignity recommended that the Quebec Government should introduce, by June 2013, a bill recognizing “medical assistance in dying” – which means euthanasia and assisted suicide – as “appropriate care at the end of life”.
- **WE CAN NO LONGER STAY SILENT!** We must demand respect from all for our democratic institutions – including our democratically elected governments. They are the ones we have entrusted our political future and the common good to. No court and no commission should dictate to them what is good for Canadian society.
- **ONLY CANADIAN PARLIAMENT** can resolve these issues of life and death. As a matter of fact, in May 2010, the Members of Parliament again said “no” to a bill (C-384) which would have legalized euthanasia and assisted suicide.
- **AND LET US HAVE NO ILLUSIONS!** No matter what the promoters of euthanasia and assisted suicide might say, the slippery slope has proven to exist in countries and states that have legalized these deadly practices. The safeguards originally put in place are sooner or later ignored and the most threatened people are the sick, the aged, the disabled and the depressed. One example: a study published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal* (May 2010) indicates that 32% of all euthanasia deaths in the Flanders (Belgium), between June and November 2007, were done without request or consent.
- **HOW INCOHERENT** we would be if, on the one hand, we put all our energies in preventing suicide while, on the other hand, legalizing assisted suicide! What a contradiction it would be if we rightly kept condemning elder abuse, while at the same time legalizing euthanasia and assisted suicide – the ultimate abuse.
- **THE DANGER IS REAL.** We must defend the most vulnerable, remembering that we sooner or later will all become vulnerable. We must protect our right to life rather than create a so-called right to die. The solution is not euthanasia or assisted suicide. The solution is palliative care until natural death. We must all have access to palliative care when the time comes. It is a question of public safety, dignity, true compassion and solidarity.

□ **IT IS TIME TO SPEAK UP!**

- **CONTACT** Minister of Justice Robert D. Nicholson to ask him to appeal the B.-C. Supreme Court decision in the *Carter case*. (His address : Honorable Robert Douglas Nicholson, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, 284 Wellington St., Ottawa, ON, K1A 0H8).

- **CONTACT** your Member of Parliament (name, House of Commons, Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6) or
<http://www.parl.gc.ca/MembersOfParliament/MainMPsCompleteList.aspx?TimePeriod=Current&Language=A>

AND IF YOU LIVE IN QUÉBEC, contact your provincial MP to tell him or her that you want to live in a society that respects and defends the equal worth of all its citizens, and the inherent dignity of each person until natural death.

- **GET INVOLVED IN THE MEDIA.** React to articles and interviews. Your opinion and your experience are certainly just as worthwhile !
- **THE MESSAGE IS SIMPLE :**

NO to euthanasia and assisted suicide

YES to palliative care until natural death

- **NEED HELP** to speak up? Two organizations are actively involved in promoting respect for life and human dignity at the end of life:
- Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, a Canada-wide network
(www.euthanasiaprevention.on.ca)
 - Vivre dans la Dignité, a Québec network
(www.vivredignite.com)
- **TO BETTER UNDERSTAND** these issues, read the Catholic Organization for Life and Family publications (www.colf.ca) or contact (613) 241-9461, ext. 161:
- “Euthanasia and assisted suicide : why not? Quick answers to common arguments”
 - “Euthanasia and assisted suicide – Urgent questions”
 - “Life in the balance” – A workshop on euthanasia and assisted suicide. Guide for organizers.
 - “Living, suffering and dying... What for?” – A reflection on the Christian meaning of life and suffering.

FOR MORE INFORMATION :

Catholic Organization for Life and Family
(613) 241-9461, ext. 161

The Catholic Organization for Life and Family is co-sponsored by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus