



The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Alberta Mackenzie Provincial Council



Most Reverend Richard Gagnon
Archbishop of Winnipeg
President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops
2500 Don Reid Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1H 2J2

Your Grace:

RE: Bill C-7 (Expansion of Medical Assistance in Dying)

We thank the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops for being part of the more than 50 religious' leaders from across Canada who released the open letter to all Canadians in opposition to Bill C-7 An Act to Amend the Criminal Code (medical assistance in dying) on October 14, 2020

As members of the Alberta Mackenzie Catholic Women's League in Alberta (approximately 9,000 members strong) we have and continue to support sanctity of life from birth to natural death. We have been active in letter writing campaigns against euthanasia as well as promoting the need for good palliative care, to exclude medical assistance in dying in hospice/palliative care facilities and protection from coercion of conscience for healthcare professionals.

We are now organizing a postcard/ letter writing campaign to our MPs to rethink amending the criteria for medical assistance in dying and so the *We Can and Must Do Much Better* article is very timely for us.

We believe that life is sacred; it's received from God and given back to God at the time that He chooses, not when we choose. We need to talk freely with our children and families about death and suffering, as it is part of life. From the time we are conceived in our mother's wombs until our natural death we are the Lord's. In our discussions we read an article written by Blessed Henry Newman in which he talks about the meaning of life and addresses pain and suffering (his complete article is attached):

"Therefore I will trust Him.
Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away.
If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him;
in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him;
if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him.
My sickness, or perplexity, or sorrow may be necessary causes of some great end,
which is quite beyond us."

As we continued to discuss our position, we began to realize that very seldom do we hear homilies on the sanctity of life; euthanasia, medical assistance in dying or pain and suffering. If the Church's position on those issues are not understood nor communicated regularly through homilies it becomes very easy for parishioners to buy into the thinking that deciding to end one's life is quite acceptable. It cannot be assumed that parishioners understand the church's teachings on these issues if they never or seldom are expressed by our church leaders in the parish. We are concerned that those who are in favour or neutral on the topic of medical assistance in dying may not know or understand the consequences of their actions. We believe that parish priests are in the best position to speak to their parishioners about these sensitive issues as they contravene the Gospel and by addressing them can stimulate conversations around the kitchen table.

Please consider sending the Blessed Henry Newman article to your priests as a springboard for discussion of life issues in their parishes. When we all come to understand that each of us has a purpose and need to fulfil that purpose, we begin to look at life and death differently. We know and understand the gift of life; we also need to understand the importance of the gift of death.

Thank you for your leadership and guidance in these very troubling times.

Regards

Judy Look

Alberta Mackenzie Catholic Women's League
abmkprovpres@gmail.com

"This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

cc. Bishop Jon Hanson
Bishop William McGrattan
Archbishop Gerald Pettipas
Archbishop Richard Smith
Bishop Paul Terrio

Readings Blessed John Henry Newman

I have a place in God's counsels, in God's world, which no one else has;
whether I be rich or poor, despised or esteemed by man,
God knows me and calls me by my name.
God has created me to do Him some definite service;
He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another.
I have my mission—I never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.
Somehow I am necessary for His purposes,
as necessary in my place as an Archangel in his
—if, indeed, I fail, He can raise another, as He could make the stones children of Abraham.
Yet I have a part in this great work;
I am a link in a chain, a bond of connexion between persons.
He has not created me for naught.
I shall do good, I shall do His work;
I shall be an angel of peace,
a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it,
if I do but keep His commandments and serve Him in my calling.

Therefore I will trust Him.
Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away.
If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him;
in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him;
if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him.
My sickness, or perplexity, or sorrow may be necessary causes of some great end,
which is quite beyond us.
He does nothing in vain; He may prolong my life, He may shorten it;
He knows what He is about.
He may take away my friends,
He may throw me among strangers,
He may make me feel desolate,
make my spirits sink, hide the future from me
—still He knows what He is about.
— *[Blessed John Henry Newman](#)*

MLA Citation

- “Saint John Henry Newman”. *CatholicSaints.Info*. 17 June 2020. Web. 16 October 2020.
<<https://catholicsaints.info/saint-john-henry-newman/>>