



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

**EDUCATION & HEALTH CHAIR**  
**Communiqué #1**  
**February 10, 2020**



To: Diocesan Chairpersons of Education and Health  
CC: Diocesan Presidents, Provincial Executive (for information)  
CC: National Chairperson of Education and Health (for information)  
FROM: Gerda Hazenberg, Provincial Chairperson, Education and Health

## **ABORTION AND EUTHANASIA**

Among the most divisive issues that face humanity today are moral questions that arise at the beginning or end of the life journey. Both abortion and euthanasia seem to elicit widely different moral responses in Canadian society. The Catholic Church teaches that all life must be respected. It teaches that both abortion and mercy killing is wrong. Yet no political party in our country dares to discuss this issue of the sanctity of life.

Our Holy Father Francis in his “*Evangelii Gaudium*” opens with these words:

“The great danger in today’s world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience.”

Our “blunted conscience” has a lot to do with the situation as we find it today. The Canadian government is now attempting to expand euthanasia to include advance directives, as well as extending it to situations in which death is not reasonably foreseeable. It is also attempting to make it available to mature minors, the mentally ill, and the cognitively impaired. In the Northwest Territories last year there were more abortions than live births (although the actual figures are very hard to come by.) In a letter dated January 31, 2020 to Prime Minister Trudeau the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops wrote: “At this point in Canada’s history, we should ask, with integrity and honesty, what kind of culture we are leaving to future generations.” (CCCCB, Jan. 31/20)

## **A CALL TO ACTION**

Each of us is called to action **today**, both personally in our daily lives, and in our communities and province or territory.

We need to bring this topic up for discussion in our personal encounters with our family and friends. We can no longer hide from this topic and leave it to others—governments and church leaders. Whenever we are seated at a dinner table with our families or when we are having a coffee at Tim Horton’s (or any other establishment) with our friends, we need to steer the conversation from our “frivolous pursuits” and guide the conversation to questions such as these:

1. What would you say or do for a friend who told you they were going to contemplate Medical Assistance in Dying? (MAiD)
2. How do you feel about MAiD? Why?
3. What does our faith tell us about abortion and euthanasia?

This is certainly daunting but we know that the Holy Spirit is right beside us at that table.

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**MARCH FOR LIFE** - May 14 this year. We need to be out there in the capitals of Edmonton and Yellowknife, as well as in our local communities. Our collective voices must be heard. Let's plan a big event this year.

**PALLIATIVE CARE**

The National Palliative Care Week for 2020 has not yet been announced; however, the League has developed a palliative care postcard to address the issue of palliative care. Consider using the postcard after masses during National Palliative Care Week, for 12 Hours of Prayer, for Palliative Care day, or by providing them to family and friends to voice their concerns. The postcard can be a campaign at any time during the year. To access the card and printing instructions go to the national website, [cwl.ca](http://cwl.ca).

In the article, "Palliative Care Doctors Draw the Line," Executive Director Sharon Baxter of the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association states, "It has become more and more apparent that everybody has universal access to MAiD (medical assistance in dying) across Canada, but there is not universal funding for hospice and palliative care." Baxter further notes, "...MAiD is 100 per-cent funded and palliative care isn't." Dr. Denise Marshall, a palliative care physician, states, "Parliament is rewriting the law to broaden access to assisted suicide and euthanasia at a time when less than 30 per-cent of Canadians have access to palliative and hospice care." (*The Catholic Register*, December 15, 2019).

May our Lady of Good Counsel be our guide as we go about our lives each day.

Gerda