



DIOCESE OF LONDON

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
1070 Waterloo Street
London, Ontario N6A 3Y2
Canada

Tel: (519) 433-0658
Fax: (519) 433-0011

September 29, 2005

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

As bishop of this diocese and as a fellow Christian, I am deeply worried about a private member's Bill now before the House of Commons that proposes to make euthanasia legal in Canada. This Bill, C-407, was given first reading last June. The government proposes to bring it forward soon to second reading. The Attorney General declared a few months ago that he considered that it was time to look closely at the case for euthanasia.

Let me be clear: whether it is called euthanasia, or mercy-killing, or doctor-assisted suicide, the reality is that this Bill proposes to make murder legal in our country. What is more, it risks setting our country on a course which is the exact opposite of the one it should be following. What we need is universal palliative and hospice care for the dying, more research and training in the field of pain control, better-funded home-care so that loved ones can be looked after in a comfortable environment as they face their final days.

Some people argue that there is a right to die. As Catholics, we believe in fundamental human rights, but the right to die is not one of them. Indeed, the concept of rights is now being used to justify all sorts of legislation which does harm to the social and moral fabric of our nation. We are forgetting that along with rights, there are duties. In this case, we have a duty as a nation to care for the most vulnerable so that they do not come to believe that they are burdens to society or to their loved ones.

Catholics faithful to Church teaching are opposed to euthanasia in any form precisely because of this: it denies the sacredness of the human person and the dignity of each one of us. Our commitment lies in true compassion, which Pope John Paul II explained consists in suffering with and sustaining those in difficulty. Did not John Paul himself teach us how to die with dignity?

I ask you to join with me in opposing this proposed Bill. Inform yourself about its progress in the legislature. Contact your MP and make it clear you are opposed to euthanasia. Pray that this Bill will be quickly defeated.

And pray for those who struggle with age, handicaps and disease so that they will never lose sight of their own dignity and will be surrounded with people who, through their love and care, reveal to them the loving, caring face of God.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *Ronald Fabbro, C.S.B.*

Most Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro, C.S.B.
Bishop of London