



**Elgin Roman Catholic
Family of Parishes**

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Dear Parishioners,

Happy Feast of St. Joseph.

When pondering this great man and beautiful feast, I am often drawn back to my childhood days. In the evenings, when visiting my grandparents who shared the family homestead with us, my brothers, sister and I would often find them finishing the holy rosary. And they always, each night, ended the rosary with the following prayer:

Prayer to Saint Joseph for a Happy Death

O Blessed Joseph, who died in the arms of Jesus and Mary, obtain for me, I beseech you, the grace of a happy death. In that hour of dread and anguish, assist me by your presence, and protect me by your power against the enemies of my salvation. Into your sacred hands, living and dying, Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I commend my soul. Amen.

On this feast day my attention is drawn to this for a couple of reasons. First, as mentioned, the example of our ancestors and their capacity to pass on the faith is without doubt, and I am grateful for the gift of experiencing the faith of my grandparents. A second reason comes from a recent meeting of priests, with our bishops, and the reality of the pervasiveness of assisted suicide across the Diocese of London and beyond. MAiD, Medical Assistance in Dying, has become popular and, as a result, generated many inquiries and concerns. The priests realize the need for information to be shared with parishioners, equipping them with the knowledge necessary for informed decisions about life and death.

I would like to share with you the following statement from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCC) given Easter 2021:

Message from the Catholic Bishops of Canada to the Faithful on the Expansion of Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide in Canada

I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly (John 10:10)

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

During this Easter season as we celebrate the resurrection of Christ and the new life we have in him, we desire to engage our Catholic faithful on a subject of crucial importance to all of us. Bill C-7 has now become law, expanding euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada, known as “Medical Assistance in Dying” (“MAiD”). As with the 2016 legislation that decriminalized these practices across Canada, the Catholic Bishops of Canada have consistently objected to such a law and most recently its expansion through Bill C-7 which allows euthanasia and assisted suicide even for those whose death is not “reasonably foreseeable”. The possible pressures that will be placed on persons with mental illnesses or disabilities resulting from the most recent legislative changes are all too real, perilous and potentially destructive.

Our position remains unequivocal. Euthanasia and assisted suicide constitute the deliberate killing of human life in violation of God’s Commandments; they erode our shared dignity by failing to see, to accept, and accompany those suffering and dying. Furthermore, they undermine the fundamental duty we have to take care of the weakest and most vulnerable members of society. Human life must be protected from conception to natural death, at all stages and in all conditions.

In the new and challenging situation we now face, we truly wish to acknowledge and support all those individuals and communities who continue to defend life by resisting euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada, or by promoting life through the care of family, friends and loved ones in their suffering, or in attending to the sick and dying as a dedicated healthcare worker or as a compassionate volunteer.

The experiences of families and healthcare professionals have shown us that palliative care is beneficial for a patient's physical, emotional, and spiritual condition, especially when provided early on. Practiced in a "community of care" setting, palliative care can alleviate and control pain and physical, psychological and spiritual suffering as well as loneliness and isolation, feelings of a loss of dignity, purpose and meaning, and the burden of care often experienced by family, friends and caregivers. Palliative care, and not euthanasia or assisted suicide, is the compassionate and supportive response to suffering and dying.

At this point, it is important to become informed, to renew our involvement wherever we live, and to partner with members of our parish or other faith groups and organizations to continue lobbying our elected officials about these matters. Above all, we need to pray earnestly for a new outpouring of grace, so that the fear and despair experienced by many will give way to courage and hope and that all may welcome the call to support the suffering and dying in ways that reflect the loving and compassionate gaze of Jesus, the risen Lord who lives forever.

+ Richard Gagnon
Archbishop of Winnipeg
President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

8 April 2021

Echoing Archbishop Gagnon we realize the importance of Information.

The pastoral team is working on a couple of projects. First a brochure to help answer some questions on this topic, which will soon be made available. There is also a plan to host a lecture series to offer information about MAiD and guidance on how to help people deal with suffering that comes with aging, illness, loneliness, etc. Our last presentation on this topic was in May 2015 and so it is time to gather again and listen to the professional experiences and thoughts of doctors, psychologists, grief counselors, & palliative care givers.

If you are interested in assisting on bringing this lecture series to our family of parishes please contact the office and leave your name and contact information. We are looking for a group to work on this in the next couple of weeks. We will need volunteers to plan the series, and host sessions at each of our parishes.

St. Joseph was given the vocation to care and protect the Holy Family. Jesus was very vulnerable and authorities sought to take His life (Mt 2:16) and Joseph shielded Him from harm. Pope Francis sees in St. Joseph an intercessor for the vulnerable, "every poor, needy, suffering or dying person, every stranger, every prisoner, every infirm person is "the child" whom Joseph continues to protect. For this reason, Saint Joseph is invoked as protector of the unfortunate, the needy, exiles, the afflicted, the poor and the dying." (Patris Corde 5)

St. Joseph pray for us.

God Bless you.



Fr. John Johnson March 20th, 2023

Our Mission: *Jesus said, "Go make disciples...I am with you always (Mt. 28:18-20)*
Our Vision: *Strengthened by the Eucharist, we are moved to bring healing to a wounded world.*