

HOPE. COMPASSION. CARE. A Catholic Response to Medical Assistance in Dying

A Crisis of Care – And a Call to Action – Dignity Sunday, Nov. 2, 2025

Since 2016, over 60,000 Canadians have died by euthanasia or assisted suicide (also known as Medical Assistance in Dying or MAiD). That's the population of Fredericton, NB or a packed Vancouver stadium filled with Taylor Swift fans — gone.

What started as an exception for the terminally ill has expanded far beyond what anyone imagined. Currently, MAiD is available to people who are not dying, including people with disabilities or chronic conditions. Soon, MAiD will be available to people with mental illness, and there are discussions about giving MAiD to children and people unable to consent at the time of the procedure.

MAiD is no longer a “last resort.” It's being offered to people who are **lonely, struggling financially, or unable to access proper care**. Canada is making death more accessible than life-affirming care.

But we are called to something greater. We are called to see, accept, and accompany those who suffer. Not to abandon them. *We don't eliminate suffering by eliminating the sufferer.*

The Truth About MAiD

What MAiD Is Not:

- Allowing natural death to occur.
- Stopping burdensome or extreme medical procedures.
- Giving pain medications, even if they might unintentionally shorten life.
- Offering palliative care and comfort near the end of life.

What MAiD Is:

- The intentional ending of a person's life by lethal injection or prescription.
- Euthanasia or assisted suicide under a misleading name.
- Offered to people who may be vulnerable, isolated, or unsupported as a medical treatment.

It Affects More People than We Think

- Vulnerable Canadians, especially the elderly, people with disabilities, or those who feel alone, are being offered MAiD when what they really need is support and care.
- Healthcare professionals are also under pressure to participate, even when it goes against their conscience or faith.

These are not just personal choices. *They are urgent issues of justice, conscience, and human dignity.*

Love One Another As I Have Loved You

What People Really Need

Doctors and experts tell us that all physical pain at the end-of-life can be managed with proper care. MAiD is rarely chosen because of pain. According to the Government of Canada, those who request it often say they chose MAiD because of:

- Loss of ability to participate in meaningful activities – 95.5%
- Feeling like a burden – 45.1%
- Emotional distress – 38.5%
- Loneliness or isolation – 21.1%

These are not medical concerns. They are human experiences, best met with compassion, presence, and care, not a prescription to die.

There Is Another Way

Jesus never turned away from suffering. He saw the lonely. He touched the sick. He walked beside those in pain. He never called death a solution. Palliative care offers true loving care. It relieves pain while providing emotional, social, and spiritual care. It honours the person while accepting death as part of our life's journey.

The answer to suffering isn't death — it's care.

Real Dignity Does Not Expire

We are made in God's image and God loves us unconditionally. Our worth is not based on what we can do, it comes from who we are as beloved children of God. That dignity cannot be lost. No illness, disability, or age limit can take it away.

MAiD tells people their life is no longer worth living, but the truth is that their life still matters. *Always.*

The Catholic Response

As Catholics, we are called to imitate Christ. Jesus *saw* those who were hurting, *acknowledged* their dignity, *accompanied* them in their pain, and *acted* in love to heal and to save. We must follow in His footsteps:

- *See* the dignity of the person in front of you, not just their diagnosis.
- *Acknowledge* their humanity, their vulnerability, and their suffering.
- *Accompany* them with love, presence, and prayer.
- *Act* to encourage them to choose life.

Christ made the ultimate sacrifice, laying down His life on the cross for the salvation of our souls, *so we must also lay down our lives for each other.*

MAiD and the Sacraments

MAiD is not just a medical procedure, it's the intentional ending of a human life, and the Church teaches it is *intrinsically evil*. If someone is competent and intentionally requests or receives MAiD, they are at risk of committing a mortal sin, which could lead to eternal separation from God.

Our goal should be to do everything we can to avoid that outcome. As sad as this may be, if a person intends to choose MAiD, they can not receive the sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation, or the Anointing of the Sick. Dying by MAiD can affect the availability of a funeral. Please consult your pastor if you have any questions about our Diocesan policy.

What You Can Do

- *Be present.* Call. Visit. Show up. Your love can change everything.
- *Speak up.* Ask for better mental health care, disability support, and funding for palliative care.
- *Make a plan.* Talk with your loved ones. Consider a faith-based advance care directive.
- *Pray.* For courage, wisdom, and compassion.
- *Support.* Volunteer or join parish initiatives that serve the sick and elderly.

Fr. Bishop Kirkpatrick:

The Catholic Church opposes MAiD because it violates the sanctity and inviolable dignity of human life, constitutes an intrinsically evil act of killing, reflects a dangerous cultural shift that treats persons as disposable, and contradicts the Church's call to accompany the suffering with genuine compassion and palliative care.

Our Catholic opposition to MAiD rests on a coherent moral vision:

1. Life is a sacred gift that belongs to God and must be protected from conception to natural death.
2. Euthanasia is intrinsically evil, a deliberate killing that violates divine and natural law.
3. No exception exists; the Church's teaching is absolute and universal.
4. Suffering does not justify killing; true compassion is expressed through palliative care, not through ending life.
5. Human dignity demands solidarity, not abandonment, even in the face of incurable illness.

Therefore, the Church opposes MAiD because it contradicts the fundamental belief that every human life is sacred, inviolable, and worthy of protection, and because it offers a compassionate alternative that respects both the dignity of the person and the moral law.

Action required:

In Nova Scotia, patients are now being offered Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) even before they ask for it. A new policy from the provincial medical regulator requires doctors to *proactively offer and formally refer* patients for MAiD assessments if they believe they might qualify.

Forty-two courageous physicians have said they cannot follow this policy in good conscience. They believe patients deserve compassion, care, and access to proper supports—not a suggestion of death. We need doctors who will go the extra mile to help patients find the care and services they truly need.

Tell the Nova Scotia medical regulator that this policy must change:
<https://bit.ly/NSRegulator24>

Dear Premier Houston - premier@novascotia.ca or pictoueastamanda@gmail.com

Mailing address 2042 Queen Street,
Westville, N.S.,
B0K 2A0

Phone: 902-695-3582

I have just learned that all across Nova Scotia, patients are being offered MAiD even before they ask! And the criteria keep expanding all the time. People with disabilities, people on the autism spectrum, the “frail elderly”, and even the deaf are being offered MAiD. In 2027, anyone with a psychiatric illness will also be eligible. These are all very vulnerable people who should be given support to live, not offered a way to die even before they request it. The offer might make them feel like their case is hopeless or that they should accept MAiD when they might really want care.

And now all Nova Scotia doctors must participate in this process or be disciplined by the regulators. There are doctors and other health care professionals who got into medicine to treat and care for patients, not hasten their deaths. But the government is making them request MAiD from NS Health for their patients in writing. These doctors are willing to tell their patients how to access MAiD when they ask. But in Nova Scotia, that is no longer good enough. Meanwhile, eight other Canadian jurisdictions have solved the problem.

Some people say you are saving money by encouraging people to accept MAiD. I don't want to believe that but I don't understand why a vulnerable person would be offered MAiD, sometimes more than once. I don't understand why a doctor would be forced to recommend MAiD for their patients.

When I get sick, I want to be able to get the care I need and I deserve not to be pushed to accept MAiD. **MAiD has gone too far, Mr. Premier.** In the last two elections, you ran on a promise to fix health care. Please tell me, why is the government of Nova Scotia pushing vulnerable people to choose MAiD and threatening the very doctors we need?

Thank you

SIGNATURE: _____

NAME (Please print): _____

POSTAL CODE: _____

EMAIL: _____