



Declaration by the President of the Assembly of Bishops following the passage of Bill 52 concerning end-of-life care

Friday, June 6, 2014 – The passage of the law that authorizes euthanasia at the end of life, under the name “medical aid in dying,” is a source for us of deep disappointment and keen anxiety.

The breakdown of the vote on this bill in the National Assembly – 94 MNAs voting “yea” and 22 “nay” – reflects the lack of consensus on this subject in our society. There are very many citizens who cannot accept that the ability to demand a lethal injection is a right.

Of course we understand the anguish and sorrow of everyone who has ever heard a loved one ask for death during a difficult end-of-life phase. The authentic response of society and of medicine to such a situation is *palliative care*. Palliative care is the best way to allay the suffering of a person who is approaching the end of her life, and to help her to live this final step with humanity and dignity.

We affirm our solidarity and support to all those who labour in the domain of palliative care. It is our hope that such care will be offered in all regions of Québec as soon as possible. We can hear Pope Francis reminding us: “Do not let your hope be stolen.”

For medical personnel who will be facing requests for euthanasia, we wish the strength and courage to invoke the right of conscientious objection. Our support and our prayer accompanies you.

Finally, we wish to restate our deep conviction, which is that of the Church, that human life must be protected and respected until its natural end. Euthanasia, even if legal, is utterly contrary to the dignity of life and of the person.

+ Pierre-André Fournier
Archbishop of Rimouski
President of the Assembly of Québec Catholic Bishops

June 6, 2014