
New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference

23 January 2018

Dear Parishioners,

As many of you will know, in December 2017, David Seymour's 'End of Life Choice' bill had its first reading in Parliament and was voted through to the Justice Select Committee. This Bill, which seeks to legalise euthanasia and assisted suicide, is something that we, the Bishops of New Zealand, remain extremely concerned about. We want to take the opportunity to further inform you about the complexities and risks associated with euthanasia and assisted suicide.

We are hesitant about "tacking on" activities to Mass, but from time to time a particular initiative is given permission because its focus is so important that in effect it finds its full meaning within the context of the Mass. As we gather to be nourished by God's Word (teaching and law) and by His Body and Blood, which makes possible the fullness of life, it is appropriate that something which so gravely threatens the gift of life is addressed within the context of our Sunday worship.

Today, all around New Zealand, we are making available a resource which gives 5 reasons why legalising euthanasia and assisted suicide would be dangerous. We encourage you to share it among your friends, family and networks. This information is to inform and assist you to take personal action. Each of you can make a difference. Each of you are called to make a difference.

The fact sheet being provided at Masses today is also available online by visiting the website of The Nathaniel Centre - the New Zealand Catholic Bioethics Centre - www.nathaniel.org.nz

Thank you for giving this your attention and for the support and effort you have all given to date on this issue. It is a powerful witness when the entire Catholic community is united around a point of belief and action - the upholding of the dignity of human life - which is so central to our faith and pivotal to an inclusive and caring society.

Many of you submitted to the Health Select Committee Inquiry two years ago. There is now an urgent need to let parliament know your views about David Seymour's Bill. Therefore, we urge each of you to get personally involved by sending a submission to Parliament's Justice Select Committee before the closing date of 20 February 2018. Instructions on how to make a submission will be handed out with the fact sheet.

Your voice will make a difference

Bishop Patrick Dunn, Bishop of Auckland and NZCBC President

Bishop Charles Drennan, Bishop of Palmerston North and NZCBC Secretary

Cardinal John Dew, Archbishop of Wellington

Bishop Steve Lowe, Bishop of Hamilton

Bishop Colin Campbell, Bishop of Dunedin

Bishop-Elect Paul Martin SM, Bishop-Elect of Christchurch