

Dear Pastors and People of God,

On Monday, 13 January 2020, the Government of Canada, through the Department of Justice, launched a two-week general public consultation on the expansion of eligibility for assisted suicide – euthanasia (“Medical Assistance in Dying”, commonly referred to as MAID) following the September 2019 Superior Court of Québec ruling that found it unconstitutional to limit access to MAID only to people nearing the end of life. The Government of Canada has not appealed the Québec court ruling, but instead has indicated it would be prepared to change the law for the entire country.

While the Government is committed to a full review of the legislation five years after it was passed (June 2016-June 2021), the present consultation targets one specific component of the legislation, the “Eligibility Criteria”, and is intended to help the Government form its response to the Québec court ruling.

Canadians are being invited to share their views online, or PDF through the links provided below, by the close of the consultation period on **Monday, 27 January 2020, at 11:59 p.m. (PST)**.

Online English: <https://justice.survey-sondage.ca/f/s.aspx?s=6E6210A5-E100-4201-A55D-CFB52ADA1C0C>

Online French: <https://justice.survey-sondage.ca/f/s.aspx?s=6E6210A5-E100-4201-A55D-CFB52ADA1C0C&lang=FR>

PDF English: [https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cons/ad-am/survey\\_maid\\_eng.pdf](https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cons/ad-am/survey_maid_eng.pdf)

PDF French: [https://www.justice.gc.ca/fra/cons/am-ad/survey\\_maid\\_fra.pdf](https://www.justice.gc.ca/fra/cons/am-ad/survey_maid_fra.pdf)

The questions in the survey do not ask whether or not euthanasia/assisted suicide should be expanded to include persons with disabilities. That is assumed. The only direct questions in the survey regard:

1. whether or not a person should be allowed euthanasia/assisted suicide by means of his or her own advance directives,
2. or whether the Government’s current “safeguards” are sufficient to prevent abuse, pressure, or other kinds of misuse of MAID once eligibility is broadened to people whose deaths are **not** reasonably foreseeable.

However, there is space within three sections of the survey for comments to be made. Here, you could include, for example:

1. expressions of concern about expanding access to euthanasia/assisted suicide because of pressures on or abuse of vulnerable persons (including minors, the depressed, the mentally ill, the disabled);
2. the inadequacy of the so-called “safeguards”;
3. advocacy for better and stronger safeguards;
4. and the urgent need for viable options to MAID that would be possible through more adequate government funding and support for palliative care, home care, and hospices.

The CCCB’s previous statements on assisted suicide/euthanasia, and links to the consultation, are posted on the CCCB website. Please bring to the attention of your faithful some or all of the resources provided on the assisted suicide/euthanasia web page of the CCCB website:

- in English, at <https://www.cccb.ca/site/eng/media-room/euthanasia-and-assisted-suicide>
- in French, at <https://www.cccb.ca/site/frc/salle-de-presse/leuthanasie-et-le-suicide-assiste>

It is of critical importance that a Catholic response is heard in this survey for the sake of future generations in the preservation and protection of the sanctity of human life to natural death. I strongly encourage you, people of God, to participate in this very important Federal Consultation.

In Communion,  
Most Reverend Gary Gordon  
Bishop of Victoria