



Catholic Diocese of Victoria Office of the Bishop

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February 10, 2016

Dear Fathers,

This past October 29, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) and the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB) launched a joint Declaration on Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide. The sponsoring signatories to the Declaration are now engaging in a concerted effort to obtain signatures from a wide spectrum of people in Canada who agree with the principles outlined in the Declaration. The number of signatures has grown to more than 12,150 as of February 4, 2016.

“We cannot support or condone assisted suicide or euthanasia . . . Killing a person will no longer be seen as a crime, but instead will be treated as a form of health care.”

~ Cardinal Thomas Collins

Cardinal Thomas Collins last week pressed MPs not to legalize physician-assisted death for the terminally ill, saying that MPs ought to be able to vote their conscience when legislation comes before the House of Commons later this winter. Our responsibility as Catholic leaders in our communities, in this Diocese and in Canada is clear on this issue: *we support life from the moment of conception to its natural end.*

Thus we must sign the Declaration at the earliest possible moment, and we must do our utmost to encourage parishioners to sign the Declaration. The invitation to sign the Declaration is open to all people in Canada. Signatures are able to be added on line at the following link: www.euthanasiadeclaration.ca.

Please include this link on your website, or include a link to [our Diocesan site](#)*, which provides access to the link. If you send out an electronic bulletin via email, please attach this PDF letter to it: parishioners can simply open the letter and click on the above link. Since signatures can only be captured online, please make every effort to assist parishioners who do not have access to or familiarity with the Internet, by inviting them to visit your parish office.

I cannot urge you strongly enough to participate in this historic and potentially devastating decision. The law that was overturned in February 2015 will come into effect on June 6, 2016; physician-assisted suicide has been legal in the Province of Quebec since June 2014.

If we fail to act, we condone what comes. We must unite our voices to speak effectively on this issue, and we must speak now.

In Communion,

Most Reverend Gary Gordon
Bishop of Victoria

* www.rcdvictoria.org/blog/post/en/ecumenical-and-interfaith-declaration-on-euthanasia-and-assisted-suicide-campaign-for-additional-signatures