



COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

Canada needs end-of-life care strategy: Archbishop *Archbishop Miller supports private member's motion on palliative care*

VANCOUVER, March 11, 2014 – *Archbishop J. Michael Miller released the following statement today in support of Private Member's Motion M-456, calling on the federal government to establish a pan-Canadian palliative and end-of-life care strategy.*

There is a critical need for compassionate and excellent end-of-life care in Canada, where the majority of people die without access to hospice palliative care and end-of-life services.

In 2011 the multi-party Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care called for a palliative care secretariat to develop and implement a national palliative and end-of-life care Strategy.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has long been among those urging federal and provincial governments to provide palliative as well as home care for those approaching death.

Unfortunately euthanasia and assisted suicide are often the response to Canadians' desire for decent end-of-life care.

- In recent weeks we have seen the Quebec government propose legalizing euthanasia;
- A national political party has recently come out in support of legalized assisted suicide;
- Belgium's existing euthanasia law is being expanded to include children;
- Two neighbouring U.S. states now permit assisted suicide.

For this reason I am pleased to see a light of compassion and reason present itself in Private Member's Motion M-456, calling on the federal government to establish a pan-Canadian palliative and end-of-life care strategy.

I extend my appreciation to MP Charlie Angus for sponsoring the motion calling on the federal government to work with provinces and territories on a palliative care strategy.



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Canadians approaching the end of life should have better access to ways of managing their pain and symptoms more effectively, and to receiving better support for their caregivers.

As Pope Francis recently reminded us: "The future of a people is in the elderly and in the children. A people that does not care for their elderly and their children does not have a future, because it will not have a memory and will not have a promise!"

Motion 456 offers a positive step toward improving the physical, psychological, and spiritual care of Canadians in a manner consistent with human dignity and compassion. It should be supported by all parties.

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