



“Keeping the fire of humanity burning at the Mission.”

January, 2023

This is an open letter to all men, women and especially, children of good will.

In 2022/2023 in Canada, there has been another paradigm shift as significant in terms of what it means to be human. Like all real revolutionary social changes, they can go mostly undetected. Most Canadians are not even aware of how Canada is now leading the world in the most liberal laws regarding medically-administered euthanasia. The official name MAiD stands for “Medical Assistance in Dying,” but it actually is legal permission for physicians and medical practitioners to kill their patients by lethal injection. (This is comparable to the type of lethal injection which has proven controversial when used in the U.S. to execute people, as it is considered by many to be inhumane.)

The purpose if this letter is not to tell you to get politically involved. Rather, it is first of all, as St. Paul says, “to equip the saints.” Every single person who reads this letter will at some point soon in their lives in Canada be made to face a decision involving MAiD. It will be either involve us or for someone else, in making a decision in this respect. We need to be prepared. Already, every Canadian is being taught to accept MAiD (the killing of patients) as normal, desirable, and to be considered a medical procedure, a therapeutic option. If you have not yet heard the word mentioned to you or someone you love in this way, you soon will. It will be presented to you as reasonable.

All of us, before “giving a right answer before the judgment seat of Christ,” will have to answer to a socially-expected method of terminating your life. Our children, unless educated, will put pressure on us to choose MAiD. Most of us right now are not prepared to give a good answer before the medical “judgement seats” that await all of us.

This is not the future, this is the present. 2023 will be the year when the new death “option” for Canadians will be legally “available” for all Canadians. At the end of 2022, the date of March 23 has been suspended. This should not be understood as a victory for life but only a tactical retrieve.

At the Mission, we have been aware that MAiD was been suggested to the poor by social workers for the past ten years. Now it will be everyone.

At present, this has the support of most Canadians: a recent survey found that the majority of church-going Catholics are in favor it. However, it is not clear, when you talk to the average person, that people actually understand what they are in favour of.

At the Mission, we like to be of help, to prepare each other for a time when we will have to make choices of life and death for ourselves and our loved ones, with a full understanding of what the gospel calls us to be. In January, lasting until the beginning of Lent, we are offering several ‘Bridges’ evenings to educate each other on what the gift of a “good death” actually looks like.

We will offer a background to the history of euthanasia in western culture, and in Canada. We will review the different arguments by which MAiD will be offered to us, or by which we will be urged to choose it for others. We will try to understand how society thinks about suffering and death. We will call out the ideologies that

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*Our purpose is to be and to build an inclusive community through the gifts and the needs that each of us brings. This Community of Love is a place of healing and nourishment occurring through awakening the God-given dignity and value of each person, while responding to each person’s human needs.*

have prepared for this paradigm shift within the last few years. We will study where it leads our family and neighbours. We will look at how children are being prepared in schools to think of MAiD as a compassionate choice.

We will look at some of the pastoral challenges it is raising right now for the church.

Most importantly, we will reflect on the Christian meaning of living for the Lord and dying with the Lord. Why the moment of death is central to our life of faith, how to prepare for it, how to accompany each other in this. How to live and die in a way that gives life to others, and not just stay out of “suffering or hell.”

During these Bridges evenings, we like to express our commitment to be for each other as a source of support, until death do us part. The Church prays daily for a death without pain. Suffering is not something that God wills. It is part of the care of the Church that each person faces his or her own death with the dignity of a child of God. A death that is painless, dignified with a good presentation before Christ’s Judgment, is the desire of the Church for each person. We want you to hear that the work of the Church at the Mission, as of 2023, is to really support anyone who wishes to die in Christ a Holy Death. Not alone, not abandoned in a hell of self-determination, but in the embrace of a community. To put our resources into helping those who need it. That in 2023 we will try to build our network of similarly-concerned people to provide support and care for any one tempted with and vulnerable to MAiD.

This is not a condemnation of the average Canadian who, for whatever reason, honestly cannot imagine any other option but MAiD. Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, founders of the Catholic Worker movement, often spoke of trying to help make “a society where it is a little easier to be good.” It is very hard today in our climate for ordinary people, even practicing believers, to choose the good. Such immoral choices bring a lot of suffering in society, which is not desired by God for us.

These Bridges evenings before Lent are meant to create at the Mission a climate where it is a little easier to be good by education, catechesis, prayer and practical support to the most vulnerable members of Canadian society. Compassion is shown, not through killing, but by honoring the great dignity of living and dying well in Christ.

Our last conversation with Sant’Egidio challenged us not simply admit defeat, but to have real hope and promise something that is a real and tangible alternative to the offer of death.

In this spirit of hope and assurance that death is not the last word in a person’s life, we invite you to mark your calendars and come and equip yourself at Bridges.

Father Nicolaie