

The Catholic Women's League of Canada
Position Paper on
Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide
Revised February 2006

The Catholic Women's League of Canada, representing members from every province and territory in Canada, reaffirms its respect for the gift of human life and its support for allowing people to die a natural death.

Euthanasia is the deliberate killing of someone by action or omission, with or without that person's consent, for compassionate reasons. This does not include, "Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome..." unless the intention is to cause death. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Article 2278) The League believes that human life is sacred because it is a special gift from God, that death is the end of a person's "earthly pilgrimage" (*Ibid.*, Article 1013) and that, "We are stewards, not owners of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of." (*Ibid.*, Article 2280)

"To concur with the intention of another person to commit suicide and to help in carrying it out through so-called 'assisted suicide' means to cooperate in, and at times to be the actual perpetrator of, an injustice which can never be excused, even if it is requested." (*Evangelium Vitae*, 66)

The League

- is opposed to any deliberate killing of another human being, including killing by way of euthanasia or assisted suicide or killing out of a spirit of compassion when someone's condition is judged to be terminal or lacking in quality of life
- believes that each member of society is unique, including the underprivileged, disabled, sick or infirm whose dignity needs to be honoured, respected and protected
- urges the adequate training of health care professionals in pain management
- supports all those in the health care profession who offer compassionate and competent palliative care services for the dying, their families and their friends
- encourages the formation of palliative care teams in all communities across Canada

League members urge all Canadians to reflect deeply on the consequences and dangers of giving individuals the right to take the life of another human being.

The League supports laws that offer protection for human life, from the moment of fertilization to the time of natural death. Therefore, we call upon the federal government to demonstrate that compassion compels the human community not to abandon the sick and dying but to respect the dignity of every human life.