



The Catholic Bishops
of Alberta

Les évêques catholiques
de l'Alberta

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March 25, 2026

The Annunciation of the Lord

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Pastoral Letter on Alberta Bill 18

Grace and peace to you in our Lord Jesus Christ.

As our province debates Bill 18, new provincial legislation that will introduce changes concerning Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) in Alberta, we, the Catholic Bishops of Alberta, write this pastoral letter not only to acknowledge our ongoing concern for the practice of euthanasia and physician assisted suicide, but also to express our hope that this proposed legislation will contribute important measures to protect those who are vulnerable in our province.

At the heart of our reflection is the dignity of every human person, created in the image and likeness of God. Sacred Scripture reminds us: “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you” (Jeremiah 1:5), and “I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). We affirm the sanctity of every human life from conception to natural death. This affirmation of life does not require that one use every medical means possible to preserve life, especially if the treatment is without benefit or may be burdensome to the one who suffers. In Catholic teaching, it is possible to forgo such treatment and to allow natural death to occur. The withdrawal or withholding of medical treatment is from a moral perspective not the same as willfully intending and causing the death of another person.

We acknowledge that end-of-life decisions are deeply personal and complex. In this context, it is essential that our healthcare system responds to suffering with care, compassion, and support. Every human life has inherent dignity and worth. Thus, the defense of life is called for where vulnerability—arising from illness, disability, isolation, or poverty—may negatively impact the person’s decision-making.

The Church teaches that “euthanasia and assisted suicide are always the wrong choice” (See Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, Letter *Samaritanus bonus*, 5.1), as they contradict our call to love and care for one another. Rather than intervening to hasten the end of a person’s life, we are called to accompany those who suffer through compassion, palliative care (which can effectively manage pain), and solidarity, ensuring that no person or family feels abandoned and

that care systems are strong and provide comprehensive support that meets their physical, relational, and spiritual needs.

We acknowledge that Bill 18 proposes new measures and oversight related to the availability of euthanasia and assisted suicide in Alberta. In particular, it strengthens protections for the vulnerable and focuses attention on their inherent dignity. We hope these steps reflect a growing recognition that true compassion lies not in ending life, but in caring for those who suffer. We are encouraged by the fact that the proposed legislation also protects the dignity and rights of medical professionals and faith-based institutions which in conscience, individually and collectively, do not accept MAiD as an appropriate or moral response to suffering.

A just society is one that protects the vulnerable, upholds the dignity of every person, and chooses to accompany them in times of illness and dying. The Alberta government is taking some significant steps that respect these necessary values. We encourage all the faithful to remain informed, engaged, and prayerful, and to continue fostering a culture of life in which every person is cherished, accompanied, and supported. If you are moved to act, please consider reaching out to your local MLA and encouraging them to support this bill, as well as the additional supports for the vulnerable.

On today's solemnity of the Annunciation, the Church celebrates how the blessed Virgin Mary gave her free consent to God's plan for the birth and saving mission of Jesus Christ. May we entrust all who are sick or nearing the end of life to Christ, the Divine Physician, and to the prayers of his holy Mother. May we always seek to be instruments of His mercy – bringing hope where there is despair and light where there is darkness.

Yours in Christ,

Catholic Bishops of Alberta



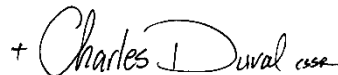
Most Reverend Stephen A. Hero
Archbishop of Edmonton



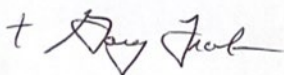
Most Reverend William McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary



Most Reverend David Motiuk
Bishop of the Ukrainian Eparchy of Edmonton



Most Reverend Charles Duval, CSsR
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