

Real Dignity Does Not Expire

We are made in God's image and God loves us unconditionally. Our worth is not based on what we can do, it comes from who we are as beloved children of God. That dignity cannot be lost. No illness, disability, or age limit can take it away.

MAiD tells people their life is no longer worth living. But the truth is that their life still matters. *Always.*

The Catholic Response

As Catholics, we are called to imitate Christ. Jesus saw those who were hurting, *acknowledged* their dignity, *accompanied* them in their pain, and *acted* in love to heal and to save. We must follow in His footsteps:

- See the dignity of the person in front of you, not just their diagnosis.
- *Acknowledge* their humanity, their vulnerability, and their suffering.
- *Accompany* them with love, presence, and prayer.
- *Act* to encourage them to choose life.

Christ made the ultimate sacrifice laying down His life on the cross for the salvation of our souls. *So we must also lay down our lives for each other.*

MAiD and the Sacraments

MAiD is not just a medical procedure, it's the intentional ending of a human life, and the Church teaches it is *intrinsically evil*. If someone is competent and intentionally requests or receives MAiD, they are at risk of committing a mortal sin, which could lead to eternal separation from God.

Our goal should be to do everything we can to avoid that outcome.

As sad as this may be, if a person intends to choose MAiD, they can not receive the sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation, or the Anointing of the Sick. Dying by MAiD can affect the availability of a funeral. Please consult your pastor if you have any questions about our Diocesan policy.

What You Can Do

- *Be present.* Call. Visit. Show up. Your love can change everything.
- *Speak up.* Ask for better mental health care, disability support, and funding for palliative care.
- *Make a plan.* Talk with your loved ones. Consider a faith-based advance care directive.
- *Pray.* For courage, wisdom, and compassion.
- *Support.* Volunteer or join parish initiatives that serve the sick and elderly.



HOPE. COMPASSION. CARE.

A CATHOLIC RESPONSE TO
MEDICAL ASSISTANCE IN DYING

Diocese of Antigonish

A Crisis of Care — And a Call to Action

Since 2016, over 60,000 Canadians have died by euthanasia or assisted suicide (also known as Medical Assistance in Dying or MAiD). That's the population of Fredericton, NB or a packed Vancouver stadium filled with Taylor Swift fans — gone.

What started as an exception for the terminally ill has expanded far beyond what anyone imagined. Currently, MAiD is available to people who are not dying, including people with disabilities or chronic conditions. Soon, MAiD will be available to people with mental illness, and there are discussions about giving MAiD to children and people unable to consent at the time of the procedure.

MAiD is no longer a "last resort." It's being offered to people who are **lonely, struggling financially, or unable to access proper care**. Canada is making death more accessible than life-affirming care.

But we are called to something greater. We are called to see, accept, and accompany those who suffer. Not to abandon them. *We don't eliminate suffering by eliminating the sufferer.*



The Truth About MAiD

What MAiD Is Not:

- Allowing natural death to occur.
- Stopping burdensome or extreme medical procedures.
- Giving pain medications, even if they might unintentionally shorten life.
- Offering palliative care and comfort near the end of life.

What MAiD Is:

- The intentional ending of a person's life by lethal injection or prescription.
- Euthanasia or assisted suicide under a misleading name.
- Offered to people who may be vulnerable, isolated, or unsupported as a medical treatment.

It Affects More People than We Think

- Vulnerable Canadians, especially the elderly, people with disabilities, or those who feel alone, are being offered MAiD when what they really need is support and care.
- Healthcare professionals are also under pressure to participate, even when it goes against their conscience or faith.

These are not just personal choices. *They are urgent issues of justice, conscience, and human dignity.*

Love One Another As I Have Loved You

What People Really Need

Doctors and experts tell us that all physical pain at the end-of-life can be managed with proper care. MAiD is rarely chosen because of pain. According to the Government of Canada, those who request it often say they chose MAiD because of:

- Loss of ability to participate in meaningful activities – 95.5%
- Feeling like a burden – 45.1%
- Emotional distress – 38.5%
- Loneliness or isolation – 21.1%

These are not medical concerns. They are human experiences, best met with compassion, presence, and care, not a prescription to die.

There Is Another Way

Jesus never turned away from suffering. He saw the lonely. He touched the sick. He walked beside those in pain. He never called death a solution.

Palliative care offers true loving care. It relieves pain while providing emotional, social, and spiritual care. It honours the person while accepting death as part of our life's journey.

The answer to suffering isn't death — it's care.