



**Guide for the
2016 National Week
for Life and The Family
in Manitoba
May 8 to 15, 2016**



*LIFE: Life
Is For
Everyone*



The National Week for Life and The Family
is an initiative of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and
sponsored in Manitoba by the Tri-Diocesan Committee for Life and the Family



Archdiocese of St. Boniface



Archdiocese of Winnipeg



Archeparchy of Winnipeg

Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. Boniface www.archsaintboniface.ca
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Winnipeg www.archwinnipeg.ca
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LIFE: Life Is For Everyone

INTRODUCTION

What is the theme for the National Week for Life and the Family 2016?

The National Week for Life and the Family is an annual initiative of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops and occurs, this year, from May 8th to May 15th, 2016. In Manitoba we have a tri-diocesan coordination committee whose mission it is to assist parishes in recognizing, during this week, and throughout the year, the importance of faith and Church in the lives of Catholics in our Archdioceses.

Our past weeks have highlighted the following themes;

2013 – Celebrate Family, Nurture Life asking all to recognize the families and life of the Parish and celebrate it.

2014 – Living includes Dying: Protecting our unborn, caring for all, until our natural death and all were asked to discuss issues pertaining to dying.

2015 – Family, A School of Christian Love : Where Life Begins and Love Never Ends and we were encouraged to look at the family as a school of love and how that is practised in our daily family life.

With the February, 2015 Canadian Supreme Court decision in Carter v. Attorney-General of Canada, the issue of physician- assisted suicide and its regulation is foremost in the minds of Christians. This year we encourage parishes to review what our faith teaches us regarding our response to physician-assisted suicide as permitted by the Supreme Court of Canada. Further what does our faith call us to do, in advocating for and supporting alternatives to physician-assisted suicide and in reaching out to the people in our parishes most in need.

We offer you this guide for some suggestions as to how your parish may prepare for discussions on end-of-life care. There are events planned during the week which include, on May 9, 2016, beginning at 6:30 p.m., the praying of the rosary and Divine Liturgy at Holy Eucharist Ukrainian Catholic Church, 550 Watts Street, followed by Late Night with the Bishops, where the Archbishops of the 3 Archdioceses will discuss the Catholic response to physician-assisted suicide. There will also be on May 11th, 2016 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, beginning at 7:00 p.m. a sharing of experiences of those who have been involved in or are working in the field of palliative care.

Section One: What are the End of Life Issues?

Care and the End of Life

Sickness, suffering and dying are an inevitable part of human experience and are a reminder of the limits of human existence. Rooted in charity, Catholic health and social services are called to respect the dignity of persons, to foster trust and to promote justice. The Catholic tradition faces the reality of suffering and death with the confidence of faith. In the face of death, the Church witnesses to her belief that God has created each person for eternal life. Suffering and death are not a final end but rather a passage transformed by the promise of the resurrection.

One of the primary goals of health care for the dying is to relieve pain and suffering. Effective management of pain in all its forms is critical in the appropriate care of the sick and dying, whatever their age or circumstance.

The experience of facing death can be a time of deep self-awareness and not merely an inevitable process to which persons must passively submit. It can be a time in which persons freely and consciously affirm the meaning of their lives. It can also be a time of profound reconciliation with family and friends, though all of these possible responses depend on the concrete situation and cultural and religious background of the person facing death. For that reason, spiritual and religious care are essential elements of care for those who are facing death. Catholic health and social service organizations along with the local parish communities should be responsive to the needs of dying persons and their families.

The Catholic tradition holds that we are stewards but not the owners of our lives and, hence, do not have absolute power over life. We have a duty to preserve our life and to use it for the glory of God, but this life is not our final goal and so we recognize that the duty to preserve life is not absolute. Thus we may reject life-prolonging procedures that are insufficiently beneficial or excessively burdensome, though suicide and euthanasia are never morally acceptable options. Advances in science and technology are dramatically improving the ability to cure illness, ease suffering and prolong life. These advances also raise ethical questions concerning end-of-life care particularly around life-sustaining treatment. Reflection on the inherent dignity of human life and on the purpose and limits of medical treatment is indispensable for formulating a true moral judgment about the use of technology to maintain life. The use of life-sustaining technology is judged by Christians in the light of their understanding of the meaning of life, suffering and death.

Good Palliative Care, that aims to relieve suffering and improve the quality of living and dying should be the key goal of all facilities that care for those facing death.

(Health Ethics Guide Third Edition Catholic Health Alliance of Canada (Pgs. 55-57)

Palliative Care

Palliative Care is for persons who are expected to die. It does not seek to lengthen or shorten their last days, but, rather to help them die as comfortable as possible. The patient remains as involved as is possible in the decision-making. Palliative care recognizes that the time has come when we can no longer cure, but the emphasis is now on care.

Palliative care is a part of hospice care. The Hospice/Palliative care concept addresses the physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological needs of the patient and should be available to all who have life-limiting illnesses. It can be provided in health care settings including the home. Palliative care is team oriented (patient, family, primary physician, nurse, social worker, priest) who identify and meet the needs of the patient and very often the family.

The approach is loving, skilled, compassionate and common sense, allowing each person to live until the moment of natural death. In the past Palliative care units were mainly used by cancer patients, but today people with many other terminal illnesses are seeking Palliative care, often through home care programs.

Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of Life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being. (CCC 2258)

Even if death is thought imminent, the ordinary care owed to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted. The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even its risk of shortening their days, can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable. Palliative Care is a form of disinterested charity, as such it should be encouraged. (CCC 2279)

Everyone is responsible for life before God who has given it to him. It is God who remains the sovereign Master of life. We are obliged to accept life gratefully and preserve it for his honor and the salvation of our souls. We are stewards, not owners of the life God has entrusted to us. It is not ours to dispose of. (CCC 2280)

The dying should be given attention and care to help them live their last moments in dignity and peace. They will be helped by the prayer of their relatives who must see to it that the sick receive at the proper time the Sacraments that prepare them to meet the living God. (CCC 2299)

Visiting the sick has always been a corporal act of mercy

Comfort Care

At some point the doctor may come to see a patient in a hospital or nursing home and tell them and their families that they are going to be putting them on comfort care. What they are suggesting is that they have nothing else that they can do to cure your loved one's disease. But, what they can offer is to keep them comfortable and to help them have a good death. It may not mean that your loved one is

dying immediately but that the aggressive treatments that they have been trying have not been working to get them better. And now they want to focus on relieving the suffering and keeping your loved one comfortable. In a nursing home plans for end of life care can be arranged ahead of time, so that when the time comes, care can be provided as needed.

Compassion

Compassion means “to suffer together” It is the ability to understand the emotional state of another person or oneself. We are called to suffer with someone. Everyone is called to be compassionate, but not everyone has the gift of compassion for those who are ill, especially the seriously ill. Discovering and accepting this gift of compassion for seriously ill patients is a first step in becoming a helpful pastoral companion. Providing a pastoral presence as death approaches is a powerful ministry and helps to often relieve the family from stress associated in caring for their loved one.

Section 2: Suggestions of Activities

Parish Activities

Host a Panel Presentation on Care of the Dying where each discipline(nurse, chaplain, family, physician, volunteer shares their experience of end of life care.

Offer a Pastoral Care course for members of the Parish who visit the sick and the dying.

Set up a display table on Palliative Care with all its resources available.

Provide material on the Catholic teaching on respect for all stages of life.

Provide information to members of the parish on the spiritual and corporal works of mercy to help them develop a compassion towards those in need, especially the sick, dying, aged etc.

Community Building Activities

Offer assistance to family members who are spending time at the hospital taking care of their loved one, by being present to them or by relieving them if they need a rest for a short period of time, or provide them with meals, child care, etc.

Follow up with phone calls after the death of their loved one.

Host a family night where movies are shown on the topic of palliative care and encourage group discussions. Get the children involved in visiting the sick and shut-ins so that they will grow up with compassion for others and will learn how to respect all stages of life.

Prayer Related Activities

Offer Mass or a Liturgy for the one in the Parish who is dying or who has died so that they will experience the loving presence of the parish family.

Scriptural Passages

If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord, so whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. (Romans 14:8)

Death is swallowed up in victory, O death, where is thy sting. (Cor. 15:50)

I am the Resurrection and the life, whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. (John 11: 25-26)

Bless the Lord O my Soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your inequities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy. (Psalm 103:2-4)

When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed the sick. (Matt. 14:14)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our afflictions, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any way afflicted, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Cor. 1:3-4)

For He said to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. (Romans 9:15)

Quotes (These may be used for Sunday Bulletin inserts)

All of us must care for life, cherish life, with tenderness and warmth, to care for life is to give oneself in tenderness and warmth for others, to have a concern in my heart for others. Caring for life from the beginning to the end. What a simple thing, what a beautiful thing. So go forth, and don't be discouraged. Care for life, it's worth it.

Cardinal Bergoglio (now Pope Francis) in a homily in 2005

When her mother approached her for caring for the poor and the sick at home, **St. Rose of Lima** said to her, "When we serve the poor and the sick we serve Jesus. We must not fail to help our neighbours, because in them we serve Jesus.

Jesus is the starving, the parched, the prisoner, the stranger, the naked, the sick, the suffering, the dying, Jesus is the oppressed, the poor. To live with Jesus is to live with the poor. To live with the poor, is to live with Jesus. **Jean Vanier**

When earthly existence draws to a close, it is again charity which finds the most appropriate means for enabling the elderly, especially those who can no longer look after themselves, and the terminally ill to enjoy genuinely human assistance and to receive an adequate response to their needs, in particular their anxiety and their loneliness. In these cases , the role of the family is indispensable ; yet families

can receive much help from Social agencies and if necessary from recourse to palliative care, taking advantage of suitable medication and social services available in public institutions or in the home.

Evangelium Vitae 1995 The Gospel of Life

Jesus' whole life and mission involve accepting powerlessness and revealing in this powerlessness the limitlessness of God's love. Here we see what compassion means. It is not a bending toward the underprivileged from a privileged position; it is not reaching out from on high to those who are less fortunate below; it is not a gesture of sympathy or pity for those who fail to make it in the upward pull. On the contrary, compassion means going directly to those people and places where suffering is most acute and building a home there. **Henri Nouwen**

We need to be angels for each other, to give each other strength and consolation, because when we fully realize the cup of life is not only a cup of sorrow, but also a cup of joy we will be able to drink it.

Henri Nouwen

Section Three: Resources

Websites:

Palliative Care

Short Videos

Some thoughts on Ministering to the Sick and Dying - Kevin De Young blogs.thegospelcoalition.org

Common Signs of Approaching Death – Hospice Aide – Bob Hagberg

Ministering to those who are sick and, suffering, and Dying- Rimy Degolacion September 6, 2015
[newlifevideoclips](#)

Nurses Share Thirty Years of Spiritual Experience with Death and Dying – Becky Hawkins

The Journey of Dying and Grieving part 2 - ib Vimeo

Short videos on Compassion: On U Tube

40 Acts of Compassion: Micah Christian

If We Could See Inside Other Hearts: Life (Everyone Matters)

One Step: A Short Film About Compassion: Cloud Paradise

Books

The Way of the Heart: Henri Nouwen

Compassion: Henri Nouwen, Donald P McNeil, Douglas Morrison

The Wounded Healer: Henri Nouwen

Final Journeys: A Pastoral Guide for bringing Care and Comfort at the end of life. Maggie Callanan

Here on the way there: A Catholic Perspective on Dying and what follows. William H. Shannon

A Caregivers Guide: A Handbook about end-of-life care. Canadian Hospice- Palliative Care Association

Dying Well: Peace and Possibilities and the end of life: Ira Bycock MD

My Mother, Your Mother: Embracing Slow Medicine. The Compassionate approach to caring for your aging Loved ones. Dennis McCullough

Children's Books

Media Guide: Books and Movies That Teach About Compassion and Kindness: Natalie Sriger Velush

Stone Soup: Ann McGovern

The Quiltmakers Gift: Jeff Brumbrew

Peace Begins With You: Katherine Scholes

Have You Filled A Bucket Today?: Carol McCloud

Quotes For Ukrainian Catholic Resources (On Compassion)

Do you think that the man-loving God has given you so much that you could use it only for your own benefit? No, but so that your abundance might supply the lack of others. **St. John Chrysostom**

With all your power, ask the Lord for humility and brotherly love, because God freely gives His grace for love towards one's brother. Do an experiment on yourself: one day ask God for love towards your brother and another day live without love. You will see the difference. **St. Silouan the Athonite**

The poor are not the spectacle of human misery and suffering that evokes compassion and disgust, but they are the icons of Christ in the broken world. **St. John Chrysostom**

If you find that there is no love in you, but you want to have it, then do deeds of love, even though you do them without love in the beginning, the Lord will see your desire and striving and will put love in your heart. **St. Ambrose**