



WILLIAM T. MCGRATTAN

BISHOP of CALGARY

December 14, 2022

*St. John of the Cross, Memorial*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we prepare for the Solemnity of Christmas our focus is drawn to the mystery of the Incarnation, Jesus, the Word made Flesh. This taking on of our humanity by God in the Person of Jesus, serves to remind us of the inherent dignity of every human life.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 2258) states:

***"Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains for ever 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."***

The Government whose role is to protect our basic human rights, including the fundamental right to life from conception to natural death, has sought instead to expand access to physician-assisted suicide. This new legislation would now include those suffering with forms of mental illness and disabilities.

In responding to this current moral and social issue, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCC) formed a Joint Ad hoc Committee on Palliative Care. It was comprised of medical, theological, ethical, and pastoral experts who were united in addressing this culture of death. They developed **Horizons of Hope: A toolkit for Catholic Parishes on Palliative Care**, an educational resource to help understand and reflect upon the many end-of-life issues we will face.

The **Horizons of Hope** program has been designed for:

- People seeking to learn more about palliative care and Catholic Church teaching on end-of-life;
- Individuals recently diagnosed with serious and/or terminal illness;
- Family members and friends seeking guidance and access to resources as they accompany the loved one faced with a serious or terminal illness;
- Medical professionals, caregivers;
- Members of pastoral care teams and other parishioners; and
- Parishes seeking to form a Compassionate Community program.

This program will allow parishioners to learn and reflect upon end-of-life issues and to promote the need for excellent palliative care. It will assist in clarifying misinformation, and reverse the

**ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CALGARY**

Catholic Pastoral Centre | 120 17 Ave SW, Calgary, AB T2S 2T2

Phone: 403-218-5526 | Fax: 403-264-0272

deceptive messaging found in this increasing culture of death. This 4-module program is being offered simultaneously to all the faithful in our Diocese at several locations:

- **Module 1:** Understanding the Human Experience of Dying and Death - January 9 (7 to 9 pm)
- **Module 2:** Discerning and Making Decisions at the End of Life - January 16 (7 to 9 pm)
- **Module 3:** Accompanying Those at the End of Life - January 23 (7 to 9 pm)
- **Module 4:** Supporting and Integrating Within the Wider Community - January 30 (7 to 9 pm)

To register, please visit [catholicyc.ca/horizonsofhope](https://catholicyc.ca/horizonsofhope) to participate in one of the following six sites:

- Catholic Pastoral Centre (120 – 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue SW, Calgary)
- Ascension Parish, Calgary
- St Gerard Parish, Calgary
- St Martha Parish, Lethbridge
- Holy Family, Medicine Hat
- St James, Okotoks

The program will also be offered in February 2023 for the clergy and religious. It will address the specific pastoral and sacramental considerations they face in their ministry regarding end-of-life issues.

The Catholic Church remains opposed to euthanasia and as such stands for the dignity of every human life from conception to natural death. It will continue to support the conscience rights of health care professionals and all organizations in our society that protect and defend human life. Through this diocesan initiative it is my sincere hope that we can work together in bringing about a renewed culture of life that respects the inherent dignity of every human life, from conception to natural death.

May our Lord, who comes into this world as a humble and defenseless child, teach us to receive and protect the precious gift of life in every person.

Yours in Christ,



+William T. McGrattan  
Bishop of Calgary