

Statement on Second Reading of Assisted Suicide Bill

Friday, November 29th, 2024 @ 2:46 pm



Following the decision of MPs to vote in favour of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill at the Second Reading today (29 November), Bishop John Sherrington, Lead Bishop for Life Issues, said:

“We are disappointed that MPs have voted in favour of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill progressing through parliament. We believe that this bill is flawed in principle and also contains particular clauses that are of concern. We ask the Catholic community to pray that members of parliament will have the wisdom to reject this bill at a later stage in its progress.

“In addition to being opposed to the principle of assisted suicide, we are particularly concerned with clauses in the bill that prevent doctors from properly exercising conscientious objection, provide inadequate protection to hospices and care homes that do not wish to participate in assisted suicide and allow doctors to initiate conversations about assisted suicide. We ask that these voices be heard in the next stages of the Bill to strengthen the deep concerns about this proposed legislation.

“We have expressed the view, during this debate, that genuine compassion involves walking with those who need care, especially during sickness, disability and old age. The vocation to care is at the heart of the lives of so many people who look after their loved ones and is the sign of a truly compassionate society. It is essential that we nurture and renew the innate call that many people have to compassionately care for others.

“It remains the case that improving the quality and availability of palliative care offers the best pathway to reducing suffering at the end of life. We will continue to advocate for this and support those who work tirelessly to care for the dying in our hospices, hospitals and care homes.”