

12 Hours of Prayer

for
Palliative
Care



May 7-13, 2023

"Palliative care is an expression of the truly human attitude of taking care of one another, especially of those who suffer.

It is a testimony that the human person
is always precious,

even if marked by illness and old age."

(Pope Francis)

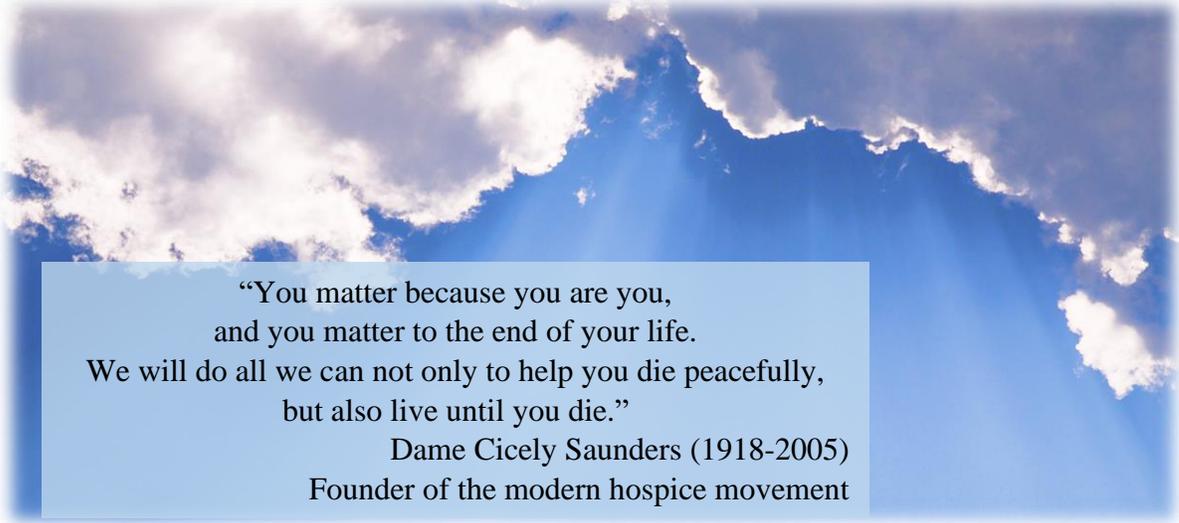


**The Catholic Women's
League of Canada**

For further information visit
www.cwl.ca

Information and Resources

12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care May 7-13, 2023



“You matter because you are you,
and you matter to the end of your life.
We will do all we can not only to help you die peacefully,
but also live until you die.”
Dame Cicely Saunders (1918-2005)
Founder of the modern hospice movement

People often need to be reminded that each person is unique and each one matters to the end of their lives. In today’s world, it is so easy to discard the sick, the vulnerable and those who cause discomfort. However, every life is valuable and should be protected until natural death.

Canadians live in a society that seems to scream for control—control of everything—money, happiness, possessions and even of when they die. Medical assistance in dying (MAiD) is constantly being made more readily available. People living in stressful situations or poverty and with sickness, disability or old age may find nowhere else to turn, and MAiD becomes a reasonable option.

The “12 Hour of Prayer for Palliative Care” Kit is again available for 2023. Members have strongly indicated there is a great need for prayer at this time as guidelines for qualifying for MAiD become more open. Members must continue to pray, educate and take action in asking for palliative care to become an official essential service to all Canadians.

Councils are encouraged to use this kit to provide a prayer service within their parishes. It may be at the church with 12 hours of continuous prayer or at home with individuals praying during certain hours. I am confident each council will use this program, now in its seventh year, and pray in a way that meets its ability as a council.

Councils are also invited to request a **mass intention** for palliative care during May 7-13.

Please take time to review the information in this package. It contains a message of support from National President Fran Lucas, prayers, information, resources and links which may be helpful in planning a day of prayer.

Margaret Schwab

Margaret Schwab
National Chairperson of Education and Health

A Message from National President Fran Lucas

I recall my time as national chairperson of education and health and working on the “12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care” that began the year before. The stir within the membership on its release and the various options associated with it were of great interest to members. They embraced the program then and continue to do so today as the value of life lived out in a loving, spiritual, comfortable way has been proven to be vital—especially through the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The kit for “12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care” includes numerous options on how to take part:

- *Horizons of Hope: A Toolkit for Catholic Parishes on Palliative Care* from the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCCB)
- various viewing options
- CCCB’s Office for Family and Life

Speaking on palliative care, Pope Francis said, “We are experiencing a strong universal trend toward the legalization of euthanasia. Even in these harsh circumstances, if the person feels loved, respected, and accepted, the negative shadow of euthanasia disappears or becomes almost non-existent. This is because the value of his/her being is measured by the ability to give and receive love, and not by his/her productivity.”

Assisted suicide is on the rise, with the numbers going up yearly. In Canada in 2020, 7,595 people died through MAiD—an increase of 34.2% over 2019, ringing the total number of people to die from assisted suicide since the enactment of legislation in 2016 to 21,589.

Euthanasia Prevention Coalition USA Chairperson Sara Buscher says, “Assisted suicide is not about pain or a peaceful death; both are myths.” Hearing that and by the adoption at the national level of resolutions—2018.03 Legislate Designation of Hospice/Palliative Care Services in Facilities to Exclude Medical Assistance in Dying and 2016.04 Amend the *Canada Health Act* to Identify Palliative Care as an Insured Health Service—more palliative care services in Canada are very much needed.

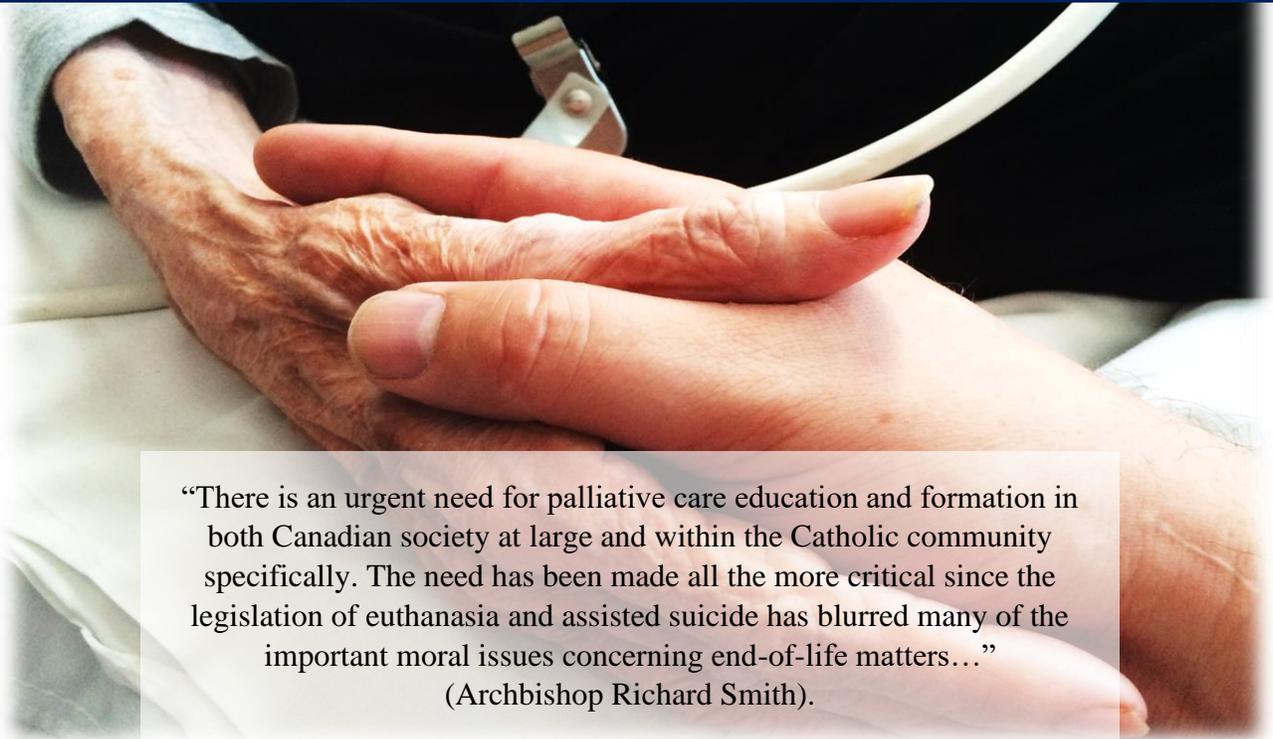
Your prayers, individually and collectively at meetings, continue to be needed for more palliative care to be made available. “12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care” is one way gifted to members. I encourage you to accept this gift and use it in your councils this May.



Fran Lucas
National President and Chairperson of International Relations



The Catholic Women's League of Canada



“There is an urgent need for palliative care education and formation in both Canadian society at large and within the Catholic community specifically. The need has been made all the more critical since the legislation of euthanasia and assisted suicide has blurred many of the important moral issues concerning end-of-life matters...”

(Archbishop Richard Smith).

On November 15 and 16, 2021, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, through its Joint *Ad Hoc* Committee on Palliative Care, launched a new resource, *Horizons of Hope: A Toolkit for Catholic Parishes on Palliative Care*. It is a free resource that seeks to offer support and information to parishioners with faith communities to assist them when faced with the illness and death of loved ones through the lens of palliative care, faith and the Compassionate Communities module.

The toolkit is available to all and gives open access to instructional material in both French and English. Download the materials from ccb.ca. The kit consists of four modules focussing on experience and understanding, discernment and deciding, accompaniment and relating and community and supporting, relating to death, dying and end-of-life decisions.

Planning

“12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care”

Pope Francis reminds us, “Let us not underestimate the power of so many voices united in prayer.”

Please consider using any day during National Hospice Palliative Care Week May 7-13, 2023

Suggestions for planning a membership-led parish council event at home.

- Plan a home-based “12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care” event in concert with National Hospice Palliative Care Week, May 7-13, 2023.
- Choose one day during this week to participate in the “12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care” service.
- Ask 12 members, on the designated day, to pray for one hour for palliative care.
- Include all members of the council and invite them to take one hour to pray for palliative care.
- Host a virtual one hour of prayer with council members.
- Provide resource materials to members to offer additional information for the one hour of prayer.
- Once the council is able to meet in person, discuss ways the council can assist in this important work.
- If members are active on social media, encourage them to share news of how they participated in this week with #12hoursofprayer.

Other resources for viewing by councils or individuals:

- *Euthanasia Deception* from Euthanasia Prevention Coalition
- *Fatal Flaws* from Euthanasia Prevention Coalition
- *Horizons of Hope: A Toolkit for Catholic Parishes on Palliative Care* found at cccb.ca.

SAMPLE

One Hour of Prayer for Palliative Care

Ask 12 members to pray for palliative care at a designated hour on the date assigned. Invite all council members to participate.

Ontario Provincial Council suggested calling upon Our Blessed Virgin Mother Mary in one of her many titles to aid us with this great cause by dedicating each of the 12 hours to her under these titles:

Hour 1: Our Lady of Prompt Succour and Our Lady of Compassion

Hour 2: Our Lady of Lourdes and Our Lady of Conquest

Hour 3: Our Lady of Good Health and Our Lady of Faith

Hour 4: Our Lady of Good Counsel and Our Lady of Good News

Hour 5: Our Lady of Fatima and Our Lady of Great Power

Hour 6: Our Mother of Perpetual Help and Our Lady of Guidance

Hour 7: Our Lady of Life and Our Lady of Miracles

Hour 8: Queenship of Mary and Star of the Sea

Hour 9: The Most Holy Name of Mary and Our Lady of Peace

Hour 10: Our Lady of the Rosary and Our Lady of Power

Hour 11: Immaculate Conception and Our Lady of Last Agony

Hour 12: Our Lady of Guadalupe and Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Sample Hours One through 12:

- *A Caregiver's Prayer* (page 18)
- *Beatitudes for Caregivers* (page 20)
- *Eight Beatitudes for Those who Minister to the Sick and Elderly* (page 20)
- Meditations for the Hour (page 16)
- Pray the Rosary (use the Luminous Mysteries, page 19)
- *Prayer for Those in Palliative Care and Hospice Services* (page 25)
- Prayer Intentions (page 8)
- *Prayer Service for Caregivers* (page 21)
- Prayer to use with hospice patients (page 15)
- Scripture Reading of the Day
- *The Ship* reflection (page 18)
- World Hospice & Palliative Care Day Prayer Service (page 23)

For those who wish to pray the Way of the Cross at some time during the day, here are two beautiful versions that have reflections appropriate to the theme of the day.

A Physician's Way of the Cross

Written by Thomas P. Bouchard, MD

Family Medicine Physician, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Excerpt used with permission from *The Measure of My Days*,* ISBN/Justin Press
cwl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/A-Physicians-Way-of-the-Cross-Brochure-pdf.pdf

The Way of the Cross Today: Reflections on Suffering in Sickness and Dying

Written by Sr. Nuala Kenny, SC, MD, OC, FRCP

saltandlighttv.org/blogfeed/getpost.php?id=69128&language=en

**The Measure of My Days* is a collection of stories about good deaths and how they are achieved in the face of, and through, suffering and loss.

“Let us not be afraid to be humble, small, helpless to prove our love for God. The cup of water you give to the sick, the way you lift a dying man, the way you give medicine to a leper, the way you feed a baby, the way in which you teach an ignorant child, the joy with which you smile at your own at home—all this is God’s love in the world today.”

(Mother Teresa)

Prayer intentions suggested for use during each hour of prayer.

For our community of faith and each of us in our personal responsibilities: that by visiting the ill and the suffering, and by encouraging those who live with disabilities or depression, we witness to the love of God and the beauty of human solidarity.

Let us pray.

For doctors providing care to the dying and the severely ill: that they promote treatments which respect human dignity and are an expression of hope and love.

Let us pray.

For those who see in euthanasia an act of compassion: that the light of the Gospel transform their vision, allowing them to see the sacredness of all life from its beginning to its natural end.

Let us pray.

For medical students: that, during the course of their formation, they meet courageous mentors who have the wisdom to educate and guide their consciences in truth.

Let us pray.

For patients and their families who despair at the prospect of suffering and death: that the Holy Spirit open the eyes of their hearts to the meaning of suffering deeply united to that of Christ on the Cross.

Let us pray.

For health workers and for all those who devote themselves to caring for the sick and the dying: that Christ strengthen their energy and fill them with love as they strive to love with His heart.

Let us pray.

For legislators and judges whose decisions touch issues of life and death: that the Holy Spirit enlighten their minds and consciences by giving them the gift of discernment.

Let us pray.

For those who work in the media: that they understand the full scope of the issues surrounding end of life care, and that the Holy Spirit enlighten their minds and consciences.

Let us pray.

For those who impact the development of Canadian society and culture: that they open their hearts to the message of Christ and contribute to the development of a true culture of life.

Let us pray.

Taken from "*Life-Giving Love*" A National Campaign for Palliative and Home Care: Against Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide from the Catholic Organization for Life and Family (COLF)

Access to Hospice Palliative Care in Canada

- One in six Canadians (15%) who died in 2016-2017 received publicly funded palliative home care in their last year of life (Health Canada, 2018).
- Sixty-two per cent of Canadians who received palliative care did so in an acute care hospital in their last month of life (CIHI, 2018).
- Eighty-six per cent of Canadians expect the federal government to develop and implement national standards for palliative care (Morrison, 2018).
- Nine in 10 (89%) Canadians agree that a document outlining the federal government's plan for implementing a palliative care program should be readily available for all Canadians (Morrison, 2018).
- Eighty-five per cent of the public support for integrating national standards for palliative healthcare services into the *Canada Health Act* (Morrison, 2018).
- Few Canadians (15%) have early access to palliative care in the community (CIHI, 2018).
- Canadians who received palliative care at home were 2.5 times more likely to die there than those who received regular home care (CIHI, 2018).
- Eighty per cent of the time, palliative care was provided during admission was unplanned or through an emergency department (CIHI, 2018).

The Role of Family and Informal Caregivers (or Carers)

- In 2018, 7.8 million Canadians aged 15 and older (25% of the population) were caregivers. Of these caregivers, almost 1.5 million were aged 65 and older (Statistics Canada, 2020).
- About one in four seniors (25%) is a caregiver (Statistics Canada, 2020). The most common sources of support for senior caregivers were help from their children (41%) and help in the form of their spouse modifying their life or work arrangements (41%). They also received support from extended family (28%) and close friends and neighbours (23%) (Statistics Canada, 2020).
- Thirty-seven per cent to 40% say that caregiving has had an impact on family relationships, and 48% say it has affected friendships (The Change Foundation, 2018).
- Seven per cent are caring for children with exceptional needs, such as a disability or chronic (The Change Foundation, 2018).
- Overall in 2018, senior caregivers spent a median of six hours per week providing care or support to family and friends, with senior men providing five hours, compared with eight hours for senior women (Statistics Canada, 2020).
- Fifty-seven per cent of workplaces try to make concessions to allow their employees to handle caregiving responsibilities; 32% say their workplace doesn't try to accommodate (The Change Foundation, 2018).
- Fifteen per cent of caregivers postponed enrolling in an education or training program because of their caregiving duties (The Change Foundation, 2018).

Definitions

World Health Organisation (WHO) Definition of Palliative Care

who.int/cancer/palliative/definition/en/

Palliative care is an approach that improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problem associated with life-threatening illness, through the prevention and relief of suffering by means of early identification and impeccable assessment and treatment of pain and other problems, physical, psychosocial and spiritual. Palliative care:

- provides relief from pain and other distressing symptoms;
- affirms life and regards dying as a normal process;
- intends neither to hasten or postpone death;
- integrates the psychological and spiritual aspects of patient care;
- offers a support system to help patients live as actively as possible until death;
- offers a support system to help the family cope during the patient's illness and in their own bereavement;
- uses a team approach to address the needs of patients and their families, including bereavement counselling, if indicated;
- will enhance quality of life, and may also positively influence the course of illness;
- is applicable early in the course of illness, in conjunction with other therapies that are intended to prolong life, such as chemotherapy or radiation therapy, and includes those investigations needed to better understand and manage distressing clinical complications.

WHO Definition of Palliative Care for Children

Palliative care for children represents a special, albeit closely related field to adult palliative care. WHO's definition of palliative care appropriate for children and their families is as follows; the principles apply to other paediatric chronic disorders (WHO; 1998a).

- Palliative care for children is the active total care of the child's body, mind and spirit, and also involves giving support to the family.
- It begins when illness is diagnosed and continues regardless of whether or not a child receives treatment directed at the disease.
- Health providers must evaluate and alleviate a child's physical, psychological and social distress.
- Effective palliative care requires a broad multidisciplinary approach that includes the family and makes use of available community resources; it can be successfully implemented even if resources are limited.
- It can be provided in tertiary care facilities, community health centres and even in children's homes.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) Information on Palliative Care

(cccb.ca/faith-moral-issues/health-care/palliative-care/)

Palliative Care

As a comprehensive approach to end-of-life challenges, palliative care combines pain management with efforts to attend to a patient's psychological, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. Palliative care also attends to the practical, emotional, and pastoral needs of caregivers, both professional and patient-identified, to ensure they receive proper support as they journey with the patient through his or her illness as well as after the patient's death.

What Palliative Care Is Not

Despite its legalization in Canada and the support it has received among some segments of the population, the Catholic Church, drawing on the deepest sources of its tradition, remains strongly opposed to euthanasia and assisted suicide. While euthanasia and assisted suicide are also referred to as Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD), these are not to be admitted within the definition and practice of palliative care. Likewise, the World Health Organization (WHO) and many secular providers of palliative care in Canada exclude euthanasia and assisted suicide from the definition of palliative care. Palliative care is a means of accompanying someone who is extremely vulnerable and significantly (if not entirely) dependent on others for care. It can be seen as an expression of human solidarity, for we all face moments of vulnerability and dependency in varying degrees from birth to natural death. Finally, while palliative care can be (and is) offered by trained practitioners in healthcare facilities, it can be (and often is) delivered by patient-identified caregivers in a number of settings, including the home. (Source: CCCB Submission to Health Canada, 2018).

Encourage members to download the palliative care postcard, and send to the prime minister and their member of parliament.

cwl.ca | Resource #178



Resources

Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) chpca.net

The CHPCA is the national voice for hospice palliative care in Canada. Advancing and advocating for quality end-of-life/hospice palliative care, its work includes public policy, public education and awareness. Established in 1991, the vision of the CHPCA is, “that all Canadians have access to quality end-of-life care.” Ninety-six per cent of Canadians are supportive or very supportive of hospice palliative care.

CHPCA’s “Hospice Palliative Care Fact Sheet,” updated in August 2017, provides information on access, demand, funding, an integrated palliative approach to care, raising awareness and many other topics. It can be downloaded at chpca.ca/resource/advocacy-strategy. This fact sheet is one of the most informative documents you can find on this topic, gives up-to-date information, and has an in-depth section on the state of home care and the role of family and informal caregivers.

The CHPCA “Marketplace” offers a wide variety of brochures, books and other media (in French and English) that deal with all aspects of palliative care. Find it at chpca.ca/shop/.

Access the following free downloads at chpca.ca/product-category/free-downloads/

- Compassionate Community Startup Toolkit
- Fact Sheet: Hospice Palliative Care in Canada
- *Guiding Family Caregivers of People at the End of Life*
- Life and Death Matters—Brochure Educational Resources—Essentials in Hospice Palliative Care
- Palliative Care: A Fact Sheet for Seniors
- *Pediatric Hospice Palliative Care Guiding Principles and Norms of Practice*
- *The Pan-Canadian Gold Standard for Palliative Home Care*

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

For a message from the president of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archbishop Richard Gagnon, on the expansion of euthanasia and assisted suicide in Canada, visit cccb.ca.

Further documentation on the position of the church on euthanasia and assisted suicide can be found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, articles 2276 to 2279. Visit vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/___P7Z.HTM.

Canadian Virtual Hospice (CVH)
virtualhospice.ca

CVH provides support and personalized information about palliative and end-of-life care to patients, family members, health-care providers, researchers and educators through a web-based platform. It is a reputable source for finding evidence-based information and support, whenever it is needed, wherever in Canada one may live.

CHV provides an e-health feature called “Ask a Professional.” Through it, Canadians have direct access to a team of expert health specialists who can help them sort through issues related to death and dying. The information and support available helps make sense in times of confusion, offers compassion in times of isolation, and reassurance in times of anxiety.

In “Programs and Services,” CVH has gathered links to palliative care associations in each province and territory. Just click on the interactive map to find a list of provincial palliative care associations, regional palliative care programs, local palliative care programs and services, home care programs, bereavement services and more. Double click any of these to find detailed information for that province or territory.

Under “Books, Links and More,” CVH lists resources on many topics. “Asked and Answered” and “Most Popular Articles” also contain valuable information.

Another item of particular interest is “10 Myths about Palliative Care” found under the “Topics” tab. It further directs users to further information related to each myth.

Additional Resources

- Hospice and Palliative Care Reflection Card (chausa.org/palliative/resources)
- Palliative Care Information Card (chausa.org/palliative/resources)
- Hospice and Palliative Care Difference Card (chausa.org/palliative/resources)
- Reflection on Palliative Care Video
(youtube.com/watch?v=GDyLutHaHyE&ab_channel=catholicealthassoc)

**“If a person feels loved, then the shadow
of euthanasia disappears.”**

(Pope Francis)

Council Discussion Starter

Your parish council may wish to hold a discussion about hospice palliative care. There can be feelings of apprehension and misunderstandings related to this topic, so sensitivity is a key component.

You may wish to start by explaining what is meant by “palliative care.” Use the definitions and resources provided above, or a summary such as the one that follows. Then, offer some discussion questions for members to respond to if they feel comfortable, or to simply reflect upon.

Palliative care is a special kind of health care for individuals and families who are living with a life-limiting illness that is usually at an advanced stage. The goal of palliative care is to provide comfort and dignity for the person living with the illness as well as the best quality of life for both this person and his or her family. A “family” is whoever the person says his or her family is. It may include relatives, partners and friends.

An important objective of palliative care is relief of pain and other symptoms. Palliative care meets not only physical needs, but also psychological, social, cultural, emotional and spiritual needs of each person and family. Palliative care may be the main focus of care when a cure for the illness is no longer possible. Palliative care services help people in later life who are ill to live out their remaining time in comfort and dignity.

Palliative care services are helpful not only when a person is approaching death but also during the earlier stages of an illness. Palliative care may be combined with other treatments aimed at reducing or curing the illness, such as chemotherapy. Families also benefit from support when their loved one is dying and after his or her death.

Would you care to share, or reflect upon, a time when you have been involved in providing support to someone in palliative care or approaching death? What supports helped you through this time? What else could have helped you?

How was your loved one's faith strengthened during his or her journey toward death? How was your own? Or those around you?

What was hardest for you in sharing your loved one's journey?

Where were you able to experience joy in this journey?

Are there ways that our council could support hospice palliative care initiatives in our community?

Are there ways that our council or individual members could support those in our community who are caregivers to individuals in hospice palliative care? Or caregivers to those approaching death in their own homes?

Prayers and Reflections

The following is a typical prayer Chaplain Barry Pennington of Crossroads Hospice & Palliative Care uses with many hospice patients:

“God, thank you for being with us right now. We confess that we don’t understand why things happen the way they do. We don’t understand why illness comes into our lives, but we do know that you walk every path of life with us. Remind Joe that you are walking with him right now. Remind Joe that you love him, no matter what he is going through. I also pray for Joe’s family. Give them your strength as they care for Joe. God, we thank you that you never leave us, that you never forsake us, but you love us. We trust you, and pray this in your name. Amen.”

“The prayer has some key thoughts [he] hopes [his] hospice patients hear:

1. God is always present with us, even when we may not be experiencing that presence.
2. As a chaplain, I don’t pretend to have the answers. I join with my patient in asking the “whys.”
3. God is with my hospice patient, especially in suffering.
4. Caregivers also experience God’s presence in caring for their loved one.
5. I affirm my personal trust in God even when none of us have the answers.”

Barry Pennington, DMin, BCC

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“Two life moments are unparalleled in an awakening a sense of awe: beholding a birth, and standing in a presence of death. The mystery of death is illuminated by analogy to birth... Whether we hold a newborn infant or touch the hand of a person near death, a fundamentally similar awareness emerges: life is exquisitely valuable. Language stretches to express it. Life belongs in a wholly different genre of value than measurable, material, temporal goods” (Thomas Aquinas).

Prayer for the Protection of Human Life

Heavenly Father,
Lord and Maker of all that is good,
fill our hearts with joy before the wonders of Your creation.
Open our eyes to the presence of Your beloved Son Jesus|
in all those we encounter and especially in the weakest and most vulnerable among us.
Where we see life threatened, at its beginning or at its end,
or by poverty and deprivation, inspire us with love and mercy,
so that, empowered by Your Holy Spirit,
we may work together to defend human dignity.
Help us to build a culture of life:
a culture in which each and every person is loved and valued as Your child,
from conception to natural death, *and in every circumstance of life.*
Amen.
Mary, Mother of the living, pray for us!

(COLF)

Meditations for the Hour (choose the meditation for your designated hour of prayer)

You may wish to begin each of the 12 hours of prayer with the following brief meditations.

1st hour: We pray for the children who watch a family member or friend struggle with their illness. That we will reach out and comfort them with words and actions of love. We ask our Father to lift their spirit in knowing that true happiness will come for those who suffer when they return to their Creator. (Thank you, New Brunswick)

2nd hour: We pray for those who are facing the end of their earthly life and for those who care for them. In *Food for the Journey*, Sr. Juliana Casey, IHM, addresses the grace and courage they share. "Many dying persons are a source of wisdom and grace. Their own courage increases ours. Their dignity speaks radiantly of the image of God that we all are. ... Courage, finally, is grace. Given to us in God's Spirit, anchored in belief in the Resurrection, courage sustains us before what will remain mystery until the end of time." (Thank you, Alberta Mackenzie)

3rd hour: Good and gracious God, who gave Jesus Christ the power to heal the sick, comfort the dying, sooth the suffering and give rest to the weary. In Your mercy, grant all caregivers the patience, love and compassion to provide strength and contentment for those approaching their final journey on earth. The day-to-day challenges that a caregiver is faced with are many. Let their eyes be open to all opportunities that surround them. Let them use them to interact and stimulate those in their care. Let them know that spending time with the dying is a blessing and a privilege, not a burden. Keep watch O Lord over all who watch, work and weep. Let Your healing power of love be the instrument that makes the earthly transition possible, prayerful and peaceful. May you know that as you care for others, God cares about you and loves you tenderly. Amen. (Thank you, Newfoundland and Labrador)

4th hour: We pray for all families journeying with their loved ones through terminal illness, that the support and compassion shown to them in palliative care facilities will sustain them in their grief and sorrow of loss. That hope will abide in them of God's loving grace.

5th hour: Touching is one of our basic human senses. We touch others and others touch us in different ways. We touch others physically by putting our arms around their shoulders, hugging them or kissing them. Others touch us by the look in their eyes, by the words they speak, by the acts of charity that they do for us. Touching is a beautiful means of communication. By our touch we can communicate comfort and support. We can communicate love and affection. We can communicate a sense of unity. When the woman with the haemorrhage touched Jesus' cloak she was healed. We pray for all those who loving touch comforts those with terminal illness. (Thank you, B.C. & Yukon)

6th hour: Heavenly Father, we come to You to help us understand the trials and tribulations that others are experiencing at this time with illnesses. Give us the wisdom to understand their pain and suffering. Keep us in Your loving embrace and as we share that embrace with those in pain, may we experience Your strength and mercy as they also experience it. O Father, let them find happiness and fulfillment in their lives so that they may rejoice when they come into Your presence. (Thank you, Prince Edward Island)

7th hour: We pray for those who fear the process of terminal illness. May they find in the caregivers in palliative/hospice facilities a relief of the anxiety through the knowledge and support, both physical and spiritual, given them by the staff.

8th hour: We pray for the children who will accompany their parent through the process of terminal illness. May they be sustained in their grief by the support of family, friends and medical and spiritual personnel they encounter in the palliative care process.

9th hour: We pray for all palliative care/hospice facilities that they may receive the funding needed to adequately provide the necessary care of those journeying through terminal illnesses.

10th hour: We pray for all families, physicians, health care providers and those involved in the palliative care programs. Send forth Your Spirit to all involved in the discussions and decision-making process of those who cannot speak for themselves. We pray to the Lord.

For all doctors counselling patients. May they always be aware of the patient's feelings as well as the disease. We pray to the Lord.

For all caregivers, affirm their trust in the Lord. Rid them of all anxiety so that they can be attentive to the needs of their loved ones. We pray to the Lord.

May we remain united in faith, always available and obedient to carry out Your work devoting ourselves to the needs of others. We pray to the Lord. (Thank you Nova Scotia)

11th hour: Eternal God, in whom mercy is endless and the treasury of compassion—inexhaustible, look kindly upon us and increase Your mercy in us, that in difficult moments we might not despair nor become despondent, but with great confidence submit ourselves to Your holy will, which is Love and Mercy itself. (Thank you, Ontario)

12th hour: Thank you, Lord, for Your presence with us this day. As we depart from this space soon, we ask You to bless us throughout the remainder of the day and guide us safely home. Bless all who walk with someone who suffers. May Your Spirit guide them in their endeavours. We ask this in the name of Jesus, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, Amen. (Thank you, B.C. & Yukon)

The Ship

What is dying?

I am standing on the seashore.

A ship sails in the morning breeze and starts for the ocean.

She is an object of beauty and I stand watching her

Till at last she fades on the horizon,

And someone at my side says, "She is gone." Gone where?

Gone from my sight, that is all;

She is just as large in masts, hull and spars as she was when I saw her,

And just as able to bear her load of living freight to its destination.

The diminished size and total loss of sight is in me, not in her;

And just at the moment when someone at my side says, "She is gone,"

There are others who are watching her coming,

And other voices take up a glad shout:

"There she comes!"—and that is dying.

—attributed to Bishop Charles Henry Brent

A Caregiver's Prayer

Heavenly Father, help me better understand and believe I can do what You ask me to do.

Forgive me for the times, even now, when I question Your judgment.

As I go about the many daily tasks of caregiving, give me energy.

As I watch my loved one oh-so-slowly walk across the room, give me strength.

As I answer his/her repeated question just one more time, give me patience.

As I look for solutions to whatever is the most recent concern, give me wisdom.

As I reminisce with him/her about the "good old days," give me a moment of laughter.

As I get to know my loved one in a new way, seeing both his/her strength and frailty, give me joy.

As I sit beside my loved one's bed waiting for his or her pain medication to take effect, give me comfort.

Lighten my burden, answer my prayer, and give me the strength to do what so often seems impossible. Give me a quiet place to rest when I need it and a quieting of my anxieties when I'm there.

Change my attitude from a tired, frustrated and angry caregiver to the loving and compassionate one I want to be.

Remain my constant companion as I face the challenges of caregiving, and when my job is through and it's time for me to let go, help me remember that he/she is leaving my loving arms to enter Your eternal embrace. Amen.

—Monica Dodds (catholicherald.com/stories/The-beatitudes-and-a-prayer-for-caregivers, 26621)

**Reflections to Lead Each Mystery of the Rosary
The Luminous Mysteries**

During the recitation of the rosary, we place our petition for increased palliative care and hospice care, and for the renewed protection of the rights of conscience for individuals and faith-based institutions, in Our Blessed Mother's hands, to present to her Son. Jesus has promised that He would not deny anything that His Mother asks of Him.

1. Baptism of the Lord

We pray today for those in palliative care. That they may feel the love and compassion that their faith can bring. We pray that they feel God's love as they did on the day of their baptism.
Spiritual Fruit: Gratitude for the gift of faith; God will hear our prayers for palliative care.

2. The Wedding of Cana

We pray today for the children and spouses of those in palliative care. That they may find solace in prayer, and in the love of God the Father during this time of their lives. We pray that they find the support they need, so that they may bring comfort to those whom they love.
Spiritual Fruit: Fidelity; for continued commitment to the sanctity of life from conception to natural death.

3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom

We pray today for all health care professionals. That they may be able to care for their patients in palliative care with courage and compassion. We pray that they are able to continue their important work without the fear of having to go against their beliefs regarding the sanctity of life.
Spiritual Fruit: Desire for holiness; moving us to action in support of access to palliative care and protection of rights of conscience for individuals and faith-based institutions.

4. The Transfiguration

We pray today for the families and friends who accompany those walking through their last days. That they find the support they need as their loved ones take their final walk towards the Lord. We pray that they have the courage to accompany those whom they hold dear.
Spiritual Fruit: Spiritual courage; to support the sanctity of life in spite of contrary public opinion.

5. The Institution of the Eucharist

We pray today for those in palliative care. That they might wrap themselves in God's love and offer themselves up to Him as God gives Himself to us in the Eucharist. We pray that comfort is found in the Lord.
Spiritual Fruit: Love of our Eucharistic Lord; providing strength to continue to speak for the vulnerable facing end of life.

Beatitudes for Caregivers

(Left side) Blessed are those who sleep poorly because they're worried about their loved one or because their loved one wakes in the middle of the night and needs help, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Right side) Blessed are those who mourn because their loved one, though still alive, is slipping away because of dementia, for they will be comforted.

(L) Blessed are the meek who force themselves to speak up and speak out to make sure their loved one receives the help he or she needs, for they will inherit the land.

(R) Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for answers to why this is happening to their loved one and how much longer it will go on, for they will be satisfied.

(L) Blessed are those who show mercy, kindness and compassion to their loved one, for they will be shown mercy, kindness and compassion.

(R) Blessed are those who keep clean a loved one who is physically or mentally unable to keep himself or herself clean, for they will see God.

(L) Blessed are those who help their loved one find moments of peace, for they will be called children of God.

(R) Blessed are those who are misunderstood, not appreciated and taken for granted in their role as caregiver, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(L) Blessed are those whose caregiving efforts are unjustly criticized—or who are falsely accused of not caring about others—because of your love for your care-receiver and your love for God, who has asked you to help His beloved son or daughter.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven.

Monica Dodds (catholicherald.com/stories/The-beatitudes-and-a-prayer-for-caregivers, 26621)

Eight Beatitudes for Those Who Minister to the Sick and Elderly

Blessed are you who listen to your patients, especially those with constant complaints, for you possess the ears of Christ.

Blessed are you who see the hurts of your patients, especially those overlooked by others, for you possess the eyes of Christ.

Blessed are you who speak kindly to your patients, especially those plagued by fear or anger, for you possess the mouth of Christ.

Blessed are you who touch your patients gently, especially those bruised by insensitivity, for you possess the hands of Christ.

Blessed are you who think prayerfully of your patients, especially those alone and discouraged, for you possess the mind of Christ.

Blessed are you who show love to your patients, especially those with chronic illness, for you possess the heart of Christ.

Blessed are you who walk tirelessly to your patients, especially those with repeated calls, for you possess the feet of Christ.

Blessed are you who persevere in your ministry, especially with compassion to all patients, for you possess the healing presence of Christ, and yours is the kingdom of heaven.

(Caring for the Sick and Elderly; A Parish Guide by Sr. Marie Roccapriore MPF)

Prayer Service for Caregivers (Use with prayer service as a personal reflection as you spend your time in prayer).

Opening Prayer

O Lord our God, You are the source of peace. Inspire the women of the League to live in peace by acting justly, loving tenderly and walking humbly with You, our God. (Micah 6:8) **We pray that You enlighten the eyes of our minds, so that we may see what hope Your call holds for us.** (Eph 1:18) **May we be firm in the hope we profess** (Heb 10:23) **and always ready to give the reason for the hope we have** (1 Ptr 3:15).

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 131

Response: In You Lord, I have found my peace.

O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. **R**

But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like the weaned child that is with me. **R**

O Israel, hope in the Lord from this time on and for evermore. **R**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, **R**

As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. **Amen**

Antiphonal Psalm

Antiphon: May Your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in You.

The Lord looks on those who revere Him, on those who hope in His love. (Psalm 33)

Our soul is waiting for the Lord. The Lord is our help and our shield. (Psalm 33)

For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. (Psalm 84:10)

O Lord of hosts, happy is everyone who trusts in You. (Psalm 84:12)

The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble. (Psalm 9:9)

Those who know Your name put their trust in You. (Psalm 9:10)

Make me know Your ways, O Lord; teach me Your paths. (Psalm 25:4)

Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation. (Psalm 25:5)

Blessed be the Lord, for He has heard the sound of my pleadings. (Psalm 28:6)

The Lord is my strength and my shield; in Him my heart trusts. (Psalm 28:7)

Truly the eye of the Lord is on those who hope in His steadfast love. (Psalm 33:18)

Let Your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in You. (Psalm 33:22)

For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from Him. (Psalm 62:5)

He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. (Psalm 62:6)

On the day I called, You answered me, You increased my strength of soul. (Psalm 138:3)

The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me; His steadfast love endures for ever. (Psalm 138:8)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,

As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.

Antiphon: May Your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in You.

Reading: Romans 15:13



World hospice & palliative care day

Voices for hospices

Call to Prayer:

The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made. *Psalm 145:9*

Leader:

God is the giver of all good gifts and the Lord of life. We are grateful for hospice and palliative care, which honor the gift of life. In the face of death, life limiting or serious illness for which there is a cure, palliative care affirms the value and dignity of human life. Both, hospice and palliative care celebrate and affirm hope in the face of suffering, joy in the midst of pain and eternal life in the face of death.

Reader 1: *Isaiah 40: 1, 11, 28-31*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

Comfort, give comfort to my people,
says your God.
Like a shepherd he feeds his flock;
in his arms he gathers the lambs,
Carrying them in his bosom,
leading the ewes with care.
Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
The Lord is God from of old,
creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary,
and his knowledge is beyond scrutiny.
He gives power to the faint,
abundant strength to the weak.
Though young men faint and grow weary,
and youths stagger and fall,
They that hope in the Lord will renew their
strength,
they will soar on eagles' wings;
They will run and not grow weary,
walk and not grow faint.

Reader 2: *Pope Francis on the importance of accompaniment*

The categorical imperative is to never abandon the sick. The anguish associated with conditions that bring us to the threshold of human mortality, and the difficulty of the decision we have to make, may tempt us to step back from the patient. Yet this is where, more than anything else, we are

called to show love and closeness, recognizing the limit that we all share and showing our solidarity. Let each of us give love in his or her own way—as a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, a brother or sister, a doctor or a nurse. But give it! And even if we know that we cannot always guarantee healing or a cure, we can and must always care for the living, without ourselves shortening their life, but also without futilely resisting their death. This approach is reflected in palliative care, which is proving most important in our culture, as it opposes what makes death most terrifying and unwelcome—pain and loneliness.

Prayer

Leader: Let us together lift up our needs to our God, who is ever-present and always loving. God of all comfort, be with those who are sick and suffering. May they receive the medical, spiritual and psychological care they need; may they be supported in love by their family and friends, enabled to live well. We pray,

All: Gracious God, hear us.

Leader: God of all companionship, be with those who care for others in their infirmity. Strengthen them with the graces of patience, love, joy and peace. Surround them with communities of care. We pray,

All: Gracious God, hear us.

Leader: God of all people, move in our hearts that we may affirm the value of all human life through our action and advocacy on behalf of those who suffer. Open our eyes to see you in the faces of those affected by serious illness that we may care for them as we would care for you. We pray

Gracious God, hear us.

All – Closing Prayer:

God of life and death, you became human, accompanied us and shared our joy and know our pain. Be with those who suffer physically, mentally or emotionally. Give us the courage and grace to draw near to those who suffer, offering our support, care and loving presence. May our solidarity and witness affirm the beauty and value of each human life. Amen.

Litany:

Saint Joseph, patron of the dying, **pray for us.**

St. Lidwina, patron of the chronically ill and suffering, **pray for us.**

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina, patron of those in pain and suffering, **pray for us.**

St. Peregrine, patron of cancer patients, **pray for us.**



PRAYER FOR THOSE IN PALLIATIVE CARE AND HOSPICE SERVICES

Leader: God of strength in weakness and hope in despair, we are yours in life and death. Sustain us for the journey of walking *[name of loved one]* home to you. Give us the graces you gave those who walked with your Son in his final moments on Earth. Steady our hands, gentle our hearts and sustain our spirits that seeing your face in *[name]* they may also see you in us.

Reader: *Matthew 27:32*

As they were going out, they met a Cyrenian named Simon; this man they pressed into service to carry his cross.

All: When we are asked to serve in ways we do not anticipate, give us the strength of Simon to carry the cross of *[name]* with love and grace, always honoring *[him/her]*.

Reader: *Mark 15:39*

When the centurion who stood facing him saw how he breathed his last he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!"

All: When *[name]*'s time on Earth draws to a close, give us the faith of the centurion to remind *[name]* that *[he/she]* is a beloved child of God.

Reader: *Luke 23:50-53*

Now there was a virtuous and righteous man named Joseph who, though he was a member of the council, had not consented to their plan of action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea and was awaiting the kingdom of God. He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. After he had taken the body down, he wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid him in a rock-hewn tomb in which no one had yet been buried.

All: Give us Joseph of Arimathea's tender extravagance and quiet faithfulness as we tend to *[name]*'s final needs on Earth. Reveal these tasks as sacramental expressions of love.

Reader: *Mark 16:1, 5-6*

When the sabbath was over Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go and anoint him. On entering the tomb they saw a young man on the right side, clothed in a white robe, and they were utterly amazed. He said to them, "Do not be amazed! You seek Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Behold, the place where they laid him."



Everyone deserves the best care possible as their life on earth comes to an end. Our fervent prayers can help bring this to reality.

- National President Fran Lucas

12 Hours of Prayer for Palliative Care from May 7-13, 2023



The Catholic Women's League of Canada calls its members to grow in faith, and to witness to the love of God through ministry and service.

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