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Letter to Members of Parliament

Dear Member of Parliament,

I am writing today to appeal to you to oppose the destructive and pessimistic approach to human life proposed in the 'Assisted Dying Bill' to be debated in the Parliament of Westminster on 11th September.

The life of every human person is equally valuable, whatever the stage or state of that life. Every human life is worth living and worthy of our utmost care and protection to its natural end. As Pope Francis has said, 'What a lie... to make people think that lives affected by grave illness are not worth living!'

I have always believed, as a citizen and as a baptised Christian, that human progress is about enhancing the life-supporting care we give to one another in the midst of life's challenges and difficulties. It can never be about destroying human life or harming another person. In opposing this Bill, you will be making a clear statement that the future of humanity does not lie in a culture of death and the deliberate destruction of another, but in a culture of life and care for one another in which medicine and science are at the service of human dignity, not threats to our very existence.

If this Bill is passed it will represent a defeat for our noble capacity as human beings to respond to illness and adversity with dignity and hope, with selflessness and a culture of life-sustaining care. It will represent a victory for despondency and despair, and a culture of diminishing respect for human life more generally. It will also be a defeat for science and medicine, in that it makes them the means of destroying human life rather than of maintaining and enhancing human life and dignity in the face of illness and death. It will change radically the trust relationship between those who are ill and those who care for them, the law no longer offering a guarantee that those who are most vulnerable in illness will be protected from intentional harm from those charged with their care.

The human, moral, social and medical implications of the so-called 'Assisted Dying Bill' are far-reaching and profound. I appeal to you, and to all who believe in the inherent dignity and value of every human life, in all its stages, to oppose the passage of this Bill in favour of a more humane and ethically sound future for humanity.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

+ Eamon Martin

Eamon Martin
Archbishop of Armagh