Letter to senate subcommittee regarding the Report on the Quality of End-of-Life-Care

Dear Senator Carstairs, On behalf of the Catholic Organization for Life and Family, I would like to congratulate you and the members of the Senate Subcommittee for the excellent report, Quality End-of-Life Care: The Right of Every Canadian, which was delivered on June 6, 2000.

June 22, 2000

The Honourable Sharon Carstairs,

Senator Chair of the Senate

Subcommittee to Update Of Life and Death

The Senate of Canada

Room 351, East Block

Ottawa, ON K1A 0A4

Dear Senator Carstairs,

On behalf of the Catholic Organization for Life and Family, I would like to congratulate you and the members of the Senate Subcommittee for the excellent report, Quality End-of-Life Care: The Right of Every Canadian, which was delivered on June 6, 2000.

Your report, full of creativity, hope and compassion is a much needed breath of fresh air in the field of end-of-life care. It strongly proclaims the dignity and inestimable worth of the human person until the very end when life is so weak and vulnerable.

Most Canadians believe that human life is the most precious gift entrusted to us and that it deserves the highest quality care. It was, therefore, critical for those who are dying, their caregivers and families who accompany them that the principles so beautifully set out in your report be rooted in the reality of Canadian society.

We greatly appreciate the political courage you have shown in your recommendations by identifying the principal actors who need to be involved in this new vision, at the level of ideas, philosophy, and mentalities as well as in programs that promote professional education and implement specific policies.

We are aware, however, that since health is a matter of provincial jurisdiction, any national strategy will only be possible with the collaboration of the provinces. Nevertheless, every person regardless of where he or she lives, has the right to quality end-of-life care. It is our responsibility as a society, it is our obligation as members of the human family.

Your concern for the family members, who are the natural care givers, is of central importance to us. We are delighted with the creativity shown in recommendation five which calls on the federal government to implement income security and job protection similar to parental leave and benefits for family members who accompany the dying.

We are very grateful for the service your Committee has rendered to Canadians by inviting them to be more concerned for the quality of care for those who in their dying are approaching the mystery of life.

Sincerely,

Most Rev. Bertrand Blanchet

Archbishop of Rimouski

Chairperson of the Catholic Organization for Life and Family