**Assisted suicide, also known as euthanasia, the right to die, assisted dying or physician assisted dying.**

This is the text of what I said in church on Sunday morning. People asked very sensible questions so I thought I would expand on it a little:

I am asking you to write to your MP, asking them to oppose calls for assisted suicide and calling for better funding for palliative and social care.

In November the Government will debate assisted suicide, with a free vote for MPs although we know Kier Starmer backs a change in the law.

This is a difficult subject: none of us want to suffer, we don’t want to see loved ones suffer and we don’t want to be a burden on our families or the state.

However, assisted suicide, the “right to die” has major practical problems apart from any spiritual beliefs we might have in the sanctity of life and who can determine when we live or die.

Doctors frequently get prognosis, ie what is likely to happen to someone with a particular disease, wrong, as we are all individuals. A neighbour of mine was told “a few weeks” about 2 years ago. He is still out and about and active.

Doctor assisted suicide destroys the trust at the heart of the doctor: patient relationship\*. Apart from anything else, it will always be cheaper for your doctor to offer death rather than ongoing treatment for diseases like cancer, especially in any NHS frequently described as “broke” or “broken”.

For those with complex needs involving a lot of care a “right to die” can become a “duty to die”, and our disabled friends are particularly anxious about this.

Vulnerable people can feel pressurised to end their lives, so they are not a burden, or because they don’t feel “they are worth treating”.

In my professional career, I have seen people in all these categories.

In countries where assisted suicide has been made legal, such as Canada and the Netherlands, so called “safeguards” have quickly failed\*\* and more and more people are essentially being coerced into choosing to die by not being offered adequate palliative care.

I have written a short letter for you to send to your MP asking them to vote against legalising assisted suicide, and for better funding for palliative care\*\*\*. Please take one, fill in your MPs name, your name and address and send it to your MP at the House of Commons. (As your name and address are on the card we suggest you might like to put it in an envelope to post). If you would like to write in your own words, even better!

For more information, please talk to me or Tom, and there is a useful website at care.org.uk. <https://care.org.uk/cause/assisted-suicide>

**Explanations**

\*You go to the doctor trusting that they want to cure you and will offer you the best treatment, especially if you are seeing a specialist for a serious diagnosis. If eventually they say there is no more treatment, you are sad but you trust that is the truth, not financial expediency.

\*\*Safeguards: The initial proposal is that assisted suicide would be available to those who doctors thought had a terminal disease with a prognosis of less than 6 months. However doctors are often wrong in their predictions.

The started aim of many supporting a change in the law is to use this as “the thin end of the wedge” and to expand the availability to many other diagnoses and situations. Once you accept that some people have the right to die, it is discriminatory not to allow others to do so, including people with psychiatric diagnoses, people with disabilities who are not terminally ill, the homeless, and children (all occurring in Canada).

\*\*\*Palliative care funding: in England only 1/3 of hospice funding comes from Government, most is from charitable donations, hence the hospice shops, sponsored walks etc to keep our hospices functioning. Few people who receive good palliative care ask to end their lives early.

In places with legalised assisted dying, state funding of palliative care has fallen.

*On the next page is a letter which you can print out and send to your MP. Even better, please use the information to write in your own words. Or ask me or the office for a copy the letter printed out for you to send.*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for representing me in Parliament.

I am writing to raise my concerns about proposed legislation to introduce ‘assisted suicide’.

I believe this will put pressure on elderly, vulnerable and disabled people, and those who think they are a burden to family, the NHS, or society, to feel obliged to choose assisted suicide.

It will radically undermine the trust fundamental to the doctor: patient relationship.

Despite “safeguards” other countries have seen assisted suicide extended to non-terminally ill people, including the disabled and homeless.

Our palliative care services need better and more secure funding, so good palliative care is available to all who need it.

I would be very grateful if you could reply and reassure me that you will not support any attempt to legalise assisted suicide.

Yours sincerely,

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(Signature) (Name)

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(Address to prove you are a constituent)