



# SYMPOSIUM ON PALLIATIVE CARE

*Towards a Narrative of Hope* 21-23 May 2024

## **GENERAL AIM OF THE SYMPOSIUM:**

The symposium aims to reinvigorate hope within the Church, other faith traditions, and society in the context of end-of-life issues; identify needs and tools that will better respond to current challenges in implementing palliative care more widely; and build a strong network of experts and practitioners who can help with the development and promotion of palliative care resources. To do this, we will explore palliative care within the wider framework of building a culture of social responsibility at the local, regional, national, and international levels.

*“Dying is not fundamentally a medical event, but rather a social event that happens in the family and in the community.”*

*- Dr. Mary Kelly*

## **Symposium Objectives:**

### **1. Build a Strong Advocacy Network**

To establish a dynamic forum and network of international and interfaith experts and practitioners to affirm and advocate for effective and comprehensive palliative and end-of-life care, which facilitates hope and honours meaning through personal and spiritual accompaniment.

### **2. Develop a Strategic Framework for Future Action**

To develop common language, strategies, and tools that promote, support, and reinforce human dignity and the sanctity of life, the relationship between fragility or vulnerability and natural dependency, and the need for the accompanying presence of others during the palliative care journey.

### **3. Establish a Working Group**

To establish a working group(s)/writing team to develop a resource(s) following the symposium that will help carry out the concrete proposals of the symposium.

Tuesday, 21 May 2024

**Opening Evening Session:**

***Opening Prayer***

**Most Rev. Christian Lépine**, Archbishop of Montreal and Chair of the CCCB Standing Committee for Family and Life

***Welcome & Introduction***

**Most Rev. William T. McGrattan**, Bishop of Calgary and President of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

***Greetings***

**Most Rev. Ivan Jurkovič**, Apostolic Nuncio to Canada

***Opening Remarks***

**Most Rev. Vincenzo Paglia**, President of the Pontifical Academy for Life

***"Hope and the Concrete Reality of Palliative Care"***

**Moira McQueen, LL.B, M.Div., Ph.D.** (Director, Canadian Catholic Bioethics Institute)

***Closing Remarks***

**Most Rev. Noël Simard**, Bishop of Valleyfield QC, Member of the Pontifical Academy for Life (PAV), and Chairman of the Scientific Board for the Symposium

Wednesday, 22 May 2024

**Morning Session:**

***"The Global Landscape of Palliative Care: Towards a Narrative of Hope"***

*This session will provide a comprehensive overview of palliative care practices, challenges, and ethical considerations in Canada and internationally.*

***"A Portrait of Palliative Care Internationally: Strengths and Challenges"***

**Mark Stoltenberg, MD, MPH, MA** (Member, Division of Palliative Care and Geriatric Medicine, Massachusetts General Hospital)

***"A Panorama of Palliative Care in Canada: Strengths and Challenges"***

**Leonie Herx MD PhD CHE CCFP(PC) FCFP** (Specialist Palliative Care Physician, Alberta Health Services)

***"Caring for the Sick and Dying: Ethical Considerations"***

**Cory Andrew Labrecque, PhD**, (Associate Professor, Theological Ethics (Bioethics)  
Chair of Educational Leadership in the Ethics of Life, University of Laval)

**Q&A Discussion**

**Round Table Discussions:**

**"Identifying Challenges and Offering Practical Solutions in Palliative Care"**

*Participants will explore the practical aspects of addressing critical challenges in palliative care. The goal is to identify tangible actions, strategies and solutions that can be implemented to enhance the delivery of palliative care.*

**Plenary session**

*Participants will provide a summary of the main challenges, strategies, solutions, and conclusions that emerged from the round table discussions.*

**Afternoon Session:**

***"Faith, Culture and Palliative Care: Caring Communities as Witnesses of Hope"***

*In this session, experts from different faith and cultural traditions will share their perspectives and discuss how faith and culture play integral roles in providing meaning, accompaniment, support and hope during the palliative care journey.*

**Interfaith Panel:**

***"A Perspective from the Catholic Church on Palliative Care"***

**Most Rev. Noël Simard** (Bishop of Valleyfield QC, Member of the Pontifical Academy for Life, and Chairman of the Scientific Board for the Symposium)

***"A Jewish Perspective on Palliative Care"***

**Rabbi Barak Hetsroni** (Chaplain and Spiritual Advisor, Jewish General Hospital. Montreal, QC)

***"A Perspective from the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada on Palliative Care"***

**Julia Beazley** (Director, Public Policy, Evangelical Fellowship of Canada)

***"A Muslim Perspective on Palliative Care"***

**Ahmed Al-Awamer, MD, MHSc** (Assistant Professor, Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of Toronto. Staff palliative care physician and educator, Supportive Care department, Princess Margaret Cancer Center)

**Interfaith Panel: Q&A Discussions**

*This Q&A session allows participants to delve deeper into the insights and experiences shared by our panellists.*

***"Palliative care as witness: towards a narrative of hope"***

**Katherine Pettus, PhD** (Senior Advocacy and Partnerships Director, International Association for Hospice and Palliative Care)

***"An Indigenous perspective on palliative care"***

**Rosella Kinoshameg, RN** (Palliative Care Nurse, Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve on Manitoulin Island)

**Q&A Discussion**

**Thursday, 23 May 2024**

**Morning Session:**

***"Promoting a Culture of Social Responsibility in Palliative Care"***

*The morning session will involve roundtable discussions centred on promoting a culture of social responsibility in palliative care, with a focus on five key areas. The goal is to develop concrete proposals that can enhance the integration of social responsibility principles within palliative care practices.*

***"PAL-LIFE White Book for Global Palliative Care Advocacy"***

**Nunziata Comoretto, MD, PhD, LRS**, (Scientific Section, Pontifical Academy for Life)

***"Catholic Health Alliance of Canada: Palliative Care Matters – Outcomes and Hopes"***

**Louise Kashuba** (Director, Palliative Institute Covenant Health)

**Roundtable Discussions**

**5 Key Areas: Concrete actions and next steps**

*Participants are assigned to one of the five discussion groups and move into breakout rooms.*

- 1- Palliative Care Advocacy - John Scott MD, MDiv** (Palliative Medicine, University of Ottawa. President-Elect, Canadian Society of Palliative Care Physicians)  
*Exploring the role of advocacy in promoting a culture of social responsibility in palliative care and discussing effective strategies and initiatives.*
- 2- Community Engagement and Support (*Horizons of Hope*)- Michelle Dabrowski, M.Th.** (Director, Office for Family and Life, CCCB)  
*Addressing the importance of involving local communities and volunteers in palliative care and sharing successful community engagement models.*
- 3- Education - William Sullivan, MD, PhD** (Joseph P. Kennedy Senior Chair in Bioethics, Georgetown University. Professor, Depts. of Family Medicine and Philosophy,

Georgetown University. Adjunct Professor, Dept. of Family and Community Medicine, University of Toronto)

*Discussing the role of academic institutions such as Universities, medical schools etc. in educating and training healthcare professionals on palliative care, with special consideration of education on medical ethics.*

- 4- Culturally Responsive Palliative Care - Hazel Markwell, PhD DTh** (Associate Professor/Inaugural Chair in Bioethics, Saint Paul University and Ethics and Policy Advisor at Catholic Health Alliance of Canada)

*Discussing how to respond to cultural needs and taking into consideration the cultural dimension in palliative care, including sensitivity to diverse abilities, norms, customs, rituals and language, etc.*

- 5- Palliative Care Policy and Legislation - Rebecca Vachon, PhD** (Program Director for Health, Cardus)

*Exploring how government policies and legislation can influence the development of a culture of social responsibility in palliative care and discussing areas for potential improvements.*

#### **Afternoon Session: Concrete actions and next steps**

*The afternoon session will focus on translating insights and discussions into concrete actions and planning for the future.*

**Plenary:** Reporting on the five (5) key areas

**Outcome:** *Gather the content from the five key area groups. The post-symposium working group will convene following the event and use the insights and recommendations as a guide for developing a resource(s) for the people of Canada and around the world to promote a culture of social responsibility in palliative care.*

#### **Closing Words**

**Msgr. Renzo Pegoraro**, Chancellor, Pontifical Academy for Life

**Most Rev. William T. McGrattan**, Bishop of Calgary and CCCB President

#### **Adjournment**