

To all Licensed Clergy, Clergy with PTO, Licensed Lay Ministers & PCC Secretaries

Date: Thursday 17th October 2024
Our ref: MJS/ec-bp4426

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As Parliament prepares to debate assisted dying, I too share my thoughts on the matter as a member of the House of Lords who represents the faith communities of Leicester and Leicestershire. I know that this topic is hugely emotive. As the media turn their attention to conversations in Westminster, we will naturally find our memories turning to the time we've spent with loved ones in their final weeks, days and moments. I know the topic has already received significant media attention and I wanted to restate that if I or the Diocese more broadly can offer pastoral support to you around this and related issues, please do be in touch.

Not all of us in the Diocese of Leicester will agree on this matter. As a society we talk about death so little and it would be natural if you are still weighing this issue. Personally, as I've reflected on my own experience of sitting with those who are dying, as I've listened to medical experts and weighed the international evidence, I have found myself deeply concerned by the move to legalise assisted suicide. Such concern echoes the General Synod which has twice voted, with a significant majority, against the legalisation of assisted suicide ([2012](#) and [2022](#)). This opposition has always been grounded in a concern for the welfare of the most vulnerable in society, for the widow, the orphan and the stranger – for the elderly, those living in poverty, those whose disability puts them at risk, and those in coercive relationships.

In addition, I want to assure you that if the Bill is passed, I will be working with colleagues to ensure that appropriate safeguards are put in place to protect the vulnerable and ensure that medical professionals are not forced to act against their conscience.

Please do talk about these issues, read about them and, of course, pray about all of this. I have included a list of potential resources below. If you find yourself, like me, moved to concern, please do write to your MP expressing your thoughts.

Regardless of where your deliberation takes you, know that I am praying for you: praying that as you consider what it means to minister to the sick and to prepare the dying for their death, you would know better the God who accompanies us through death and into new life.

In Christ,



The Rt Revd Martyn Snow
Bishop of Leicester

Bishop's Lodge, 12 Springfield Road, LE2 3BD

0116 270 8985, bishop.leicester@leicestercofe.org, www.leicester.anglican.org

Further Resources

A Guide to Terminology

1. [David Albert Jones, Defining the Terms of the Debate](#)

Overviews of assisted suicide:

1. [Anscombe Centre for Bioethics](#)
2. [Care Not Killing](#)
3. [Living and Dying Well](#)

Podcasts

1. [Lydia Dugdale, The Lost Art of Dying](#)
2. [Brian Brock, Theology, Euthanasia and Autism](#)

Further theological reflection

1. John Swinton and Richard Payne, *Living Well and Dying Faithfully* ([here](#))
2. John Wyatt, *Dying Well* ([here](#))