



BISHOPS' CONFERENCE PLENARY

ENGLAND & WALES

Resolution: Assisted Suicide

Statement

HINSLEY HALL, LEEDS, 5-8 MAY 2014

The Bishops' Conference approves the following statement:

Proposals to legalise assisted suicide for terminally ill people raise serious questions about how we care for elderly and vulnerable people.

In his statement in February 2014 to the Pontifical Academy for Life, Pope Francis said this:

"The fullness toward which all human life is oriented is not in contradiction with any condition of illness and suffering. Hence, the lack of health or the fact of one's disability are never valid reasons for exclusion or, and what is worse, the elimination of persons. The gravest deprivation experienced by the aged is not the weakening of one's physical body, or the disability that may result from this. Rather, it is the abandonment, exclusion and deprivation of love."

Everyone, not least Christians, must have a particular concern for the weakest and most vulnerable members of our society, including the elderly, the sick, the dying, the lonely, and those who do not have the loving support of family and friends. We commend the devoted work of carers, doctors, nurses, chaplains, social workers and organisations who care for them and strive to give them protection and to affirm their dignity as human beings.

We remain opposed to any form of assisted suicide and we reaffirm our support for high quality end-of-life care, whether in hospices, hospitals or the community.