

THE CONNECTION

Canada scores world record for organ donation euthanasia

LIFE AND BIOETHICS

08_02_2024



Luca
Volontè



The official number of people choosing euthanasia in liberal Canada continues to **increase** and now accounts for more than 4% of all deaths recorded in the country, with an increase of 31.2% in 2022, compared to 2021. Canada also holds the world record for

organ harvesting from patients who opted for death by euthanasia.

The good news of the past few days is the decision by Justin Trudeau's government to once again postpone the legalisation on euthanasia for the **mentally ill**, even if the motivation is debunked by the very reasons for the decision: the postponement is due to the insufficient number of mental health experts and doctors available who can identify which patients it would be right to kill. Presently, only the Catholic Church is resisting this terrible descent into the abyss that liberal governments have imposed since 2016, the year euthanasia was legalised (enforced in 2017), on the nation. Meanwhile, the government's push to use the healthy organs of those who ask to be killed by euthanasia continues.

Organ donation organisations in Ontario and Quebec, for example, are already contacting patients on the euthanasia waiting list to request their livers, kidneys and spleens if they are in good condition. A **study** published in January 2024 by the Canadian Medical Association Journal on all organ donation cases from January 2018 to December 2022 shows that since 2018, when it became possible to donate one's organs after making the decision to end one's life by euthanasia, doctors who provide medical assistance in dying (Maid, euphemism for euthanasia and assisted suicide) are encouraged to discuss/promote organ donation with eligible patients once the decision to be euthanised has been made.

In Quebec, once the decision has been reached, the doctor refers the patient and sends his or her information to the transplant centre; then the patient is explained which organs are suitable and how their removal will be carried out; the same patient can change his or her mind within the next 24 hours and, if the 'compassionate choice' is confirmed, the actual authorisation phase will be carried out. The aforementioned study concludes by saying that 'patients considering Maid are among the most vulnerable patients in the healthcare system, as they suffer from incurable diseases that cause them immense suffering. The desire of some patients to help others after their death must be honoured, but in doing so, donor professionals must ensure that the system respects their autonomy and dignity'.

Combining euthanasia with organ removal is not controversial for several Canadian doctors and, indeed, the possibility of organ donation is seen as a further altruistic incentive to euthanasia. But, the fact that medical associations have not shouted their outrage, after the country reached the world peak in euthanasia organ donations, should concern everyone. In fact, as early as late December 2022, a study was published in the American Journal of Transplantation showing Canada's record in

organ harvesting from people undergoing euthanasia. According to the December 2022 study, which was picked up by several **media outlets**, 136 people undergoing euthanasia in Canada donated their organs from 2019 to 2021. The figure far exceeds that of the other countries included in the study. In Belgium, from 2005 to 2021, there were 57 cases of organ donation following euthanasia. In the Netherlands, from 2012 to 2021, there were 86 cases of organ donation following assisted suicide. In a much shorter period of time, i.e. from 2018 to 2021, Canada was much **more prolific** in the removal of organs from citizens who were euthanised.

In all this, the Catholic Church defends its hospitals which, despite the **brutal attacks** to which they are subjected, remain among the very few bastions of respect for human dignity and natural death. Just a **few days ago**, on 3 February, pro-euthanasia activists announced their complaint against a Catholic hospital in Vancouver that refuses to provide assisted suicide: a significant legal challenge between the **Canadian section** of the world organisation Dying with Dignity and St. Paul's Hospital, run by a Catholic medical organisation, Providence Health Care, which does not allow Maid within its walls and organises transfers to other facilities that provide euthanasia for those who request it. The Archdiocese of Montreal, on the other hand, went on the **counter-attack** and filed a legal complaint on 6 February against Quebec's end-of-life legislation, because the law forces the Catholic Church to choose between allowing euthanasia or abandoning its palliative care centre, called St. Raphael.

Communist China had aroused scandal over the practice, which **emerged in 2007** and re-emerged in 2022, of imposing imprisonment and the death penalty by forcibly removing human organs. Now, with liberal Canada heading for the same precipice, silence covers every misdeed. Ironically, in 2007, when the first scandal emerged, it was from Canada that authoritative voices of human rights organisations **rose up** to call on Western countries to curb transplant tourism in China.