
UK: Bishops against Assisted Dying Bill. Mgr. Sherrington, “unprecedented attack on the sanctity of life”

With Baroness Meacher’s Bill due for debate in the House of Lords “in the next weeks, we face an unprecedented attack on the sanctity of life”. Thus begins the open letter that Bishop John Sherrington, responsible for Life Issues in the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, addressed to five million British Catholics, inviting them to pray for the defeat of the Bill and to write to peers at the House of Lords stating the reasons why they oppose the legislation, also from personal experience. The Bill, which had its 1st reading in the House of Lords last May, would allow terminally ill, mentally competent adults to decide where and how to die, with their requests being assessed by two independent doctors and a High Court judge. The second phase of the legislative process will begin on Friday, 22 October, when the Lords are due to start debating the Bill tabled by Baroness Meacher. Although the Bill must also be passed by the House of Commons to take effect, it is very worrying that the Upper House is debating the subject that thus receives a lot of attention in the British media. The last attempt to legalise assisted suicide in the UK was in 2015, when the Marris Bill was defeated by 330 votes to 118 in the House of Commons.

Silvia Guzzetti