

# A LIFE WORTH LIVING

A desperate daughter lingers in the hospice corridor, unable to summon the courage to open her mother's door. A nurse steps in, opening it for her with a gentle smile. Through her tears, the daughter pleads, "I can't see her. I don't want to see my mom like this. Can you make it stop?"

These are deeply human, natural, and understandable responses to suffering. We may avoid: "I can't look. I don't want to see her." Or try to control: "Can we stop this?" But are these our only choices when someone we love suffers so deeply? **Could we keep the door open to the possibility that there is another way to face pain, death—and, ultimately, life?**

On Friday, November 29, the House of Commons will hear the Second Reading of **a new bill on assisted suicide**, tabled by Labour MP Kim Leadbeater. In recent weeks, many have expressed their opinions on this bill: editorialists, physicians, scientists, bishops. The debate has also spread informally among relatives and friends. We would like to contribute, not just to add another opinion, but to bear witness to what we experience in our own lives.

In England, many health workers and volunteers support adults and young people who have attempted to end their lives. Some struggle with mental illness, others do not. In both cases, the majority feel their lives are not worth living and view themselves as a burden to society. Many young people and adults feel unable to meet society's demands and expectations; as a result, their lives lose purpose, with suicide appearing as the only option. **There seems to be a silent yet pervasive culture emerging where life is seen as disposable, and suicide becomes a simple, even preferable, option for many.** The rising suicide rate and declining birth rate in the UK reflect this shift.

This mindset also underpins the assisted suicide proposal, which seeks to formalize a view of life as disposable. In other countries where this culture has taken hold, political recognition has led to expansion. For example, in May 2024, a 28-year-old woman in a small village in the Netherlands died by assisted suicide due to mental health issues, specifically Autism and Depression.

Two thousand years ago, something decisive happened that changed how humanity viewed pain. **A man came into the world not to explain suffering but to embrace it through the sacrifice of his own life. He did not define life's meaning; instead, he said, "Follow me, and you will find it."** From him and his followers, a new culture emerged—a culture grounded in the belief that every human life holds infinite value. This culture endures today, inspiring countless people in hospitals, schools, and families who work tirelessly to bring hope, affirming to young people, the disabled, adults, and the elderly that their lives are worth living, no matter their circumstances.

Cicely Saunders, a British pioneer in palliative care, was one of these people. She dedicated her life to transforming our understanding of pain, confronting it rather than avoiding it. Her compassionate approach to the terminally ill sparked a quiet revolution in care, making England a global leader in palliative care. St. Christopher's Hospice, which she founded, is based on the belief that "you matter because you are you, and you matter to the last moment of your life." For her, pain and illness did not diminish dignity; rather, they invited a deeper understanding of each person's worth, beyond physical or psychological conditions. Her courage led to new care models, innovations, interdisciplinary collaborations, and more.

We are a group of friends united by the same faith that was at the heart of Cicely's life. We've discovered the true meaning of our lives not in a book or a ten-step online course, but in a person: Jesus of Nazareth. While He hasn't solved all our problems, erased our pain, or answered every question, He has never let us down. Each day, through those in whom He lives, He reminds us that what makes life truly worth living is not the absence of suffering, but the certainty of being loved by a Father who will never abandon us.

**In these challenging times, we have nothing to offer our society but this love we've received and a friendship where it can be experienced—a place where the desperate daughter and the nurse can walk together.**

Communion and Liberation

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