



**Message of Rt. Rev. Mark Davies, Bishop of Shrewsbury
for Easter 2025**

Easter celebrates the victory of life over death and our deepest identity as a nation of Christian foundation. Without Easter we could neither understand ourselves nor the values we hold to be right and true. Yet, during the 50 days of Easter celebration this year, Parliament will vote on proposals for the first time in our history, to license doctors and nurses to participate in the death of their patients by directly and intentionally helping them commit suicide. This proposal which will radically change our relationship to the medical and caring professions is to coincide with the greatest celebration of the Christian Year.

Exponents of assisted suicide have blamed the Christian inheritance and the laws flowing from it, for insisting human life be held sacred, and the care of the sick and the frailest is an imperative binding the whole of society. Christianity can certainly take responsibility for the vision of life which has led us to care for the frailest. The light of Easter made what was unthinkable to the ancients, foundational to the life of our society. The Christian claim that God so loved the world becoming one of us in Jesus Christ, in a love which went as far as the Cross, gave rise to the most transformative development in the whole of our history. Christians are not of course, alone in valuing human life, but stand with people of many religious beliefs and of goodwill, in holding human life as equally sacred and recognising the binding obligation of selfless care owed to the weakest.

The Terminally Ill Adults (end of life) Bill is not about care or the relief of human suffering, even if the alleviation of pain has long involved in medical practice, the unintended consequence of shortening life. The Bill is about crossing a moral and legal boundary and radically changing our relationship to the medical and nursing professions, from one of exclusive care, to allow killing in the form of assisted suicide. It is now widely acknowledged that the proposals before Parliament are “dangerously flawed” and we can’t fail to note that considerably more time was devoted to debating fox hunting, than has been given to this seismic change to our society.

The Assisted Dying Bill may seek to cast a shadow over the Christian inheritance we share. Yet, as night falls on the eve of Easter, fires and candles are lit by Christians in the gathering darkness, to symbolise Christ’s victory in his Resurrection and the light of faith we have received. These gentle flames point to the unfailing Light that has long guided us through all the shadows of history. In this enduring light we once more celebrate the happiness of Easter.