

CHARTER FOR PALLIATIVE CARE SIGNED BY ALL RELIGIONS IN ROME

A WORLD FIRST AS RELIGIONS CAME TOGETHER
FOR PALLIATIVE CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Rome, March 31st 2017 – *All older people with chronic or incurable illnesses approaching the final stage of their lives have the right to receive palliative care, with focus on symptom control, safeguard of dignity and quality of life and support for the family.* This is the main objective of the "**Religions of the World Charter: Palliative Care for Older People**", a universal declaration result of a **collective effort that began more than six months ago**, and signed by experts from around the world, during the Workshop held in Rome on March 30th at the **Pontifical Academy for Life**.

According to the United Nations (UN), life expectancy at birth has increased by 20 years when compared to the 48 years expectancy in 1950 to 1955, and to 68 in the years 2005-2010. According to WHO, at least 69% of the population requiring palliative care consists of elderly people. Therefore, it is essential that society be committed to ensure that palliative care become a right, and available to all those who need it. Palliative care for older people should be fully integrated in every national health system. Unfortunately, shortage of information and training in palliative care and the lack of institutional support continue to cause unnecessary suffering.

The "**Religions of the World Charter: Palliative Care for Older People**" was created to increase knowledge and universal consensus on palliative care devoted to elderly people in chronic or incurable conditions.

"Religions have in their diversity a common sentiment," said H. Exc. Mons. Vincenzo Paglia President of the Pontifical Academy for Life, during his initial greeting *"They have a responsibility to support the highest dignity of every man and every woman .*

The "**Religions of the World Charter: Palliative Care for Older People**" will help raise awareness in institutions and in the public on a critical issue of social emergency, as is wellness and health care for a specific population that will sustain a dramatic growth in terms of numbers over the next few years.

Religions together can really make a difference, because they speak to people, doctors, institutions and governments and can promote and ensure the idea that palliative care is essential for patients and their families." said Silvia Lefebvre D ' Ovid, leader of Maruzza Foudnation *"We have to strive very hard today, because numbers are growing exponentially and if something is not done at this time, hospitals will be filled with sick elderly people suffering. This must be prevented. "*

FONDAZIONE MARUZZA ONLUS

The Maruzza Foundation is an independent not-for-profit organization established by Antonio and Eugenia Lefebvre D'Ovidio in 1999 following the untimely death of their eldest daughter Maruzza. The Foundation advocates globally for effective and sustainable palliative care services for all persons affected by serious illness. Its activities are focused on the most vulnerable members of society: children and older adults.

WHAT IS PALLIATIVE CARE

Palliative Care has the aim of **controlling all symptoms, including pain**, which every patient suffering from **chronic or incurable disease may manifest**. It caters to patients in advanced stages of neurological diseases, oncological, respiratory, renal, cardiac, degenerative etc. offering the sick person the best possible quality of life while respecting his/her will.

Palliative care helps the patient and family to overcome psychological-emotional-social and spiritual hardships. It can be **provided in the home**, in specialized dedicated facilities, such as **Hospices**, or in the hospital.

Palliative care services require the intervention of **several competent professionals: doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, social and spiritual workers, together with the family become an integral part of care.**

The goal of palliative care is not to pursue impossible healing but to take care of the Person as a whole.

Until a few years ago Palliative Care were only associated with the terminal phase of cancer patients. But this is not so. Resolution 1649 (2009) of the European Parliament endorses that Palliative Care is an innovative and substantial vision of care, together with active medicine. It represents an element of health care based on the humane concept of dignity, autonomy, human rights, civil rights, patient rights and the perception and shared conception of solidarity and social cohesion.

With Law 38/2010, Italy has decreed that all patients suffering from incurable disease have the right of access to palliative care services

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