

Ethical Encounter – Palliative Care and Euthanasia



In Christchurch on Wednesday, December 13th, the Edmund Rice Justice Trust hosted an Ethical Encounter breakfast on the topic: Palliative and End-of-Life Care, and the issue of Euthanasia.

Willem Vink was our guest presenter. And he has worked for many years in palliative care nursing across a variety of settings.

Willard drew on case studies and his previous experience, offering tremendous insight. Willard touched upon many different aspects of these issues and allowed for thought-provoking discussion amongst the group.

Twenty-one people attended the event including Villa Maria student and staff who had previously participated in the street retreat in Christchurch, as well as some of the Christian Brothers and other members of the Edmund Rice Network.

The main ideas arising from the discussion were that of definition, communication and the roles of family and of the healthcare system. The definition of what Euthanasia actually is and when intervention is required proved intriguing. A significant concern is whether or not the patient can coherently communicate their wishes. Willem explored the dynamic between family and healthcare, highlighting the grey area in which these issues operate. These issues are increasingly relevant in New Zealand, as last week in parliament the first reading of the End of Life Choices Bill to allow assisted dying in New Zealand was passed by a significant margin of 76 votes to 44. The bill proposed by Act MP David Seymour would allow New Zealanders over the age of 18 to request help to die from two doctors.

Thank you to Cathy Harrison and Boris Baptist for organising this encounter, the Christian Brothers for hosting and Willard for presenting. Thank you also to those who attended

Campbell Wood
Project Officer – Edmund Rice Justice Trust

New ERJ Project Officer

Kia Ora.

My name is Campbell Wood, and I am the new Project Officer for the Edmund Rice Justice Aotearoa New Zealand Trust. My connection to the Edmund Rice Network is that I attended St Peter's College from 2010 through to 2016, was a part of the 2016/2017 Auckland Edmund Rice India Immersion trip, and am a regular participant of the Auckland Edmund Rice Reflection group. Currently, I am studying a Bachelor of Arts at the University of Auckland, majoring in both history and social anthropology.

I look forward to building on Boris Baptist's work and initiatives. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me at campbell@erjustice.org.nz or 0211845002



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