

Ethical Encounter - Euthanasia



On Monday 27th of November 2017, the Edmund Rice Justice Trust hosted an Ethical Encounter breakfast on Euthanasia. It was presented by Simon O'Connor MP, who recently chaired the Health Select Committee that looked into the Euthanasia Bill.

Simon spoke about his experiences looking into the Euthanasia bill which was the largest public discussion ever entered into by parliament – 21,000 New Zealanders wrote to the Health Committee and 944 spoke in person. Simon talked in depth about the arguments and underlying issues that were brought up by anti and pro Euthanasia supporters.

The invited guests came from a variety of backgrounds with involvement both inside and outside of the Edmund Rice

Network. This contributed to many insights beyond made into the complex issue of Euthanasia such as the underlying issue of choice vs public safety, the impact of costs and funding, the varying quality of palliative care, the way society currently deals with death and dying and the idea of alleviating suffering vs. dying.

We would like to thank all those who attended our ethical encounter and to Simon for presenting.

Boris Baptist
Project Officer – Edmund Rice Justice Trust



Thoughts on East Africa

Liam Gallagher, a St Thomas' old boy, has recently finished a six month cross cultural immersion with the Edmund Rice community in Tanzania and Kenya. Below is a brief outline of a reflection on his time in East Africa:

“I’ve been in either Tanzania or Kenya for nearly five months now, and one of the reasons I came over here was because I had spent two years studying particularly hard at university, and, sick of academic study, I wanted to ‘learn in a different way’.

Well, so what have I learned?

A lot is to do with acceptance. From a very young age, people in Mukuru are forced to deal with some of life’s most difficult hurdles – unexpected and undeserved death, blatant corruption and the completely unnecessary wasting of potential.

They are completely aware of the fact that they control only a tiny part of their destiny – they could work hard, get good grades, and still end up electrocuted, or die of malnutrition because a corrupt official squandered the money intended for food, or find themselves moving in with an apparently generous and hitherto unknown ‘uncle’ because prostitution is one of the few reliable means of obtaining shelter and security.

Or, they could end up living a comfortable existence, as the first in the family to obtain a degree in a comfortable home with a loving family.

That is the difference, the key lesson. The people in these stories accept that they’ve been dealt a shocking hand in the game of life, but understand they can’t change the cards they’ve been dealt. What they *can* change is how they use them. And change that they are willing to do – I’ve never before worked with people that have such a HUNGER to learn and are willing to make the most out of any opportunity that might arise, however slight it might be. Because that might be a opportunity that leads to another opportunity that eventually leads to a life beyond basic survival.”

Liam Gallagher

If you would like to read Liam’s full reflection, this can be found [here](#)

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