

# Health Care Decision Making for Maryland Catholics

Maryland Catholic Conference / [mdcatholic.org/endoflife](http://mdcatholic.org/endoflife)

## Bulletin/Email/Website Announcements

*End of Life Care from a Catholic Perspective*

---

*These can be used at any time; each announcement is 100 words or less.*

### **Want to control your healthcare decisions?**

The Catholic Advance Health Care Directive is a tool to help you discuss your wishes , to designate who will speak for you, and to talk about the kinds of care you want. Pray about it. Talk about it. And write your wishes down. *Visit [MDcatholic.org/endoflife](http://MDcatholic.org/endoflife) for more information.*

### **Have You Had the Conversation?**

95% of Americans want to talk about their wishes at the end of life – but it is hard to talk about. It can be scary. Our faith gives us hope in the Resurrection. It is important to have conversations about what your healthcare at the end of life will look like, glorifying God in this life and celebrating with Him in the next. The Conversation Project can help you start talking about healthcare and your wishes for the end of life with your family. *Visit [mdcatholic.org/endoflife](http://mdcatholic.org/endoflife)*

### **Support for Caregivers**

Caregiving is stressful in the best of times. If you help an ill or disabled adult with daily tasks, you might feel overwhelmed, depressed, tired, or just burnt out – and you might feel guilty for feeling this way. You are not alone. One in 12 Marylanders are caregivers - and you deserve support. *Visit [mdcatholic.org/endoflife](http://mdcatholic.org/endoflife)*

### **Do I Have to Keep Fighting My Illness?**

Life is a gift, and we also know death is a part of life. We don't have to accept medical procedures that are experimental, extreme, dangerous, financially burdensome or where the benefit is disproportionate to the expected outcome. Even when we cannot cure, we can (and should) always care. Medical care should never intend someone's death, but we can foresee death and accept it in joyful hope of the resurrection. *Visit [mdcatholic.org/endoflife](http://mdcatholic.org/endoflife)*

- continued -

### **Food and Water at End of Life**

Food and water are basic to human life. The presumption is always in favor of providing food and fluids to patients, including by feeding tubes or medical assistance. But when the body and its organs shut down, and a person cannot absorb food or fluids, it is okay to refrain so long as this choice does not cause or intend the patient's death. Remember, even when we cannot cure, we can always care. [mdcatholic.org/endoflife](http://mdcatholic.org/endoflife)

### **Reconciling with Family Near Death**

When someone is dying, that time and space is holy. Even when we cannot cure, we can always care. Don't be afraid to just sit with your loved one. It's a chance to hold their hand, ask forgiveness, pray together, maybe play their favorite song or offer a bite of favorite food. Be sure to call a priest so your loved one can receive the Sacrament of the Sick. Remind your family member that they are loved and encourage them in hope that they will soon meet Jesus face to face. [mdcatholic.org/endoflife](http://mdcatholic.org/endoflife)

### **What is Palliative Care?**

Palliative care provides relief from pain, symptoms, and stress of a serious illness at any stage. By addressing your physical, emotional and spiritual needs, palliative care improves your daily life and gives you access to comfort, information and dignity. Every Maryland hospital has an interdisciplinary palliative care team to support you and your family – because you deserve the best pain management possible. Even when we cannot cure, we can always care. *Visit* [mdcatholic.org/endoflife](http://mdcatholic.org/endoflife)

### **What is Hospice?**

Hospice serves dying patients and their families by providing care that is focused on comfort, often at home. Hospice helps manage a person's pain, symptoms and coping with the emotional, social and spiritual aspects of dying. This helps a dying person feel comfortable, live well, and make the most of his or her last months on earth before going to be with the Lord. Hospice care is available in all Maryland counties and covered under Medicare, Medicaid and most private insurance. Even when we cannot cure, we can always care. *Visit* [mdcatholic.org/endoflife](http://mdcatholic.org/endoflife)

### **Make Your Voice Heard**

Our state's General Assembly creates laws on health care and end of life issues. Make sure your voice is heard. Sign up for the Maryland Catholic Advocacy Network. You will receive occasional email updates, plus action alerts topics you choose. Sign up at [mdcatholic.org/joincan](http://mdcatholic.org/joincan).