



HOMILY HELPS

Adapted from Archdiocese of Washington Department of Life homily hints

NOTE: The Maryland legislative session opens in January. Beginning to speak about the issue in Respect Life Month will assist the faithful so they are prepared prior to the introduction of the latest physician-assisted suicide bill.

- [Oct. 17](#) Service, caring for the elderly vs. assisted suicide; the Feast of St. Luke the Evangelist, patron saint of physicians, is the following day
- [Oct. 31](#) Love of God and neighbor, caring for the elderly vs. assisted suicide
- [Nov. 14](#) End times, death and resurrection, preparing for death vs. assisted suicide
- [Nov. 28](#) End times, preparing for Christ and resurrection vs. assisted suicide

1. Assisted suicide completely denies the inherent dignity of all human life and discriminates against the poor and the vulnerable.

*The Catechism: **2258*** "Human life is sacred...God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can under any circumstance claim for himself the right directly to destroy an innocent human being."⁵⁶

2. Assisted suicide discriminates against racial and ethnic minorities.

Because of significant disparities in access to healthcare, people of color often do not have the same access to preventative medical care, specialized medical care, or insurance as whites. If assisted suicide is legalized, people of color will be more marginalized, offered suicide drugs rather than better healthcare options.

3. Assisted suicide discriminates against the poor and the elderly.

Insurance companies already have told several individuals in states where it is legal that their company would not pay for chemotherapy but would pay for assisted suicide drugs. Additionally, doctors have counseled patients to choose assisted suicide so as not to burden their families.

4. Assisted suicide discriminates against individuals with disabilities.

Bills introduced in Maryland imply that when person does not have complete ability and autonomy to do everything that a typical person can do, his or her life does not have value.

*The Catechism: **2273*** When the state does not place its power at the service of the rights of each citizen and, in particular, of the more vulnerable, the very foundations of a state based on law are undermined...

continued on next page

- 5. A physician-assisted suicide bill would create mistrust between doctors and patients because doctors will be prescribing lethal prescriptions.**

Evangelium Vitae: “Causing Death” runs completely counter to the health-care profession, which is meant to be an impassioned and unflinching affirmation of life.

- 6. A physician-assisted suicide bill would give insurance companies a cost-effective solution to dealing with clients who have costly terminal illnesses—a cocktail of the same pills given when the death penalty is administered.**

To Live Each Day with Dignity: Why would medical professionals spend a lifetime developing the empathy and skills needed for the difficult but important task of providing optimum care, once society has authorized a “solution” for suffering patients that requires no skill at all? Once some people have become candidates for the inexpensive treatment of assisted suicide, public and private payers for health coverage also find it easy to direct life-affirming resources elsewhere.

- 7. Compassion and Choices, the sponsor of the bill, provides referrals to doctors who will prescribe assisted suicide drugs even when other doctors have denied prescriptions because they feared patients were being coerced, mentally incompetent, or suffering from depression.**

Evangelium Vitae: Here we are faced with one of the more alarming symptoms of the "culture of death," which is advancing above all in prosperous societies, marked by an attitude of excessive preoccupation with efficiency and which sees the growing number of elderly and disabled people as intolerable and too burdensome. These people are very often isolated by their families and by society, which are organized almost exclusively on the basis of criteria of productive efficiency, according to which a hopelessly impaired life no longer has any value.

- 8. Providing patients a prescription to kill themselves is the opposite of compassion.**

Throughout the Gospels we witness again and again the healing love that Jesus brings to his encounters with those in need. A truly compassionate response to a patient fearful of suffering, or of being a burden at the end of his or her life is to ensure they have access to adequate pain management, palliative care, and most of all, our caring companionship.