



## **Euthanasia – The Roman Catholic View**

“Euthanasia is a grave violation of the law of God, since it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person.”

*Pope John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae, 1995*

The Roman Catholic Church regards euthanasia as morally wrong. It has always taught the absolute and unchanging value of the commandment, "You shall not kill".

The Roman Catholic Church has said that:

nothing and no one can in any way permit the killing of an innocent human being, whether a foetus or an embryo, an infant or an adult, an old person, or one suffering from an incurable disease, or a person who is dying.

Pope John Paul II spoke out against what he called a 'culture of death' in modern society, and said that human beings should always prefer the way of life to the way of death.

The Roman Catholic Church regards any law permitting euthanasia as an intrinsically unjust law.

### **The value of life**

Life is a thing of value in itself; its value doesn't depend on the extent that it brings pleasure and well-being. This means that suffering and pain do not stop life being valuable, and are not a reason for ending life.

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that each person should enter the dying process, with all its mysteries, with trust in God and in solidarity with their fellow human beings; they should die with the dignity of letting themselves be loved unconditionally.

“As Catholic leaders and moral teachers, we believe that life is the most basic gift of a loving God--a gift over which we have stewardship but not absolute dominion.” *National Conference of Catholic Bishops (USA), 1991*

## The right to die

The Roman Catholic Church does not accept that human beings have a right to die. Human beings are free agents, but their freedom does not extend to the ending of their own lives. Euthanasia and suicide are both a rejection of God's absolute sovereignty over life and death.

The church believes that each human life is a manifestation of God in the world, a sign of his presence, a trace of his glory. "The life which God offers to man is a gift by which God shares something of himself with his creature." A human being who insists that they have the 'right to die' is denying the truth of their fundamental relationship with God.

## Refusing aggressive medical treatment

The Roman Catholic Church regards it as morally acceptable to refuse extraordinary and aggressive medical means to preserve life. Refusing such treatment is not euthanasia but a proper acceptance of the human condition in the face of death.

## Assisting suicide

Since it is morally wrong to commit suicide it is morally wrong to help someone commit suicide.

“True compassion leads to sharing another's pain; it does not kill the person whose suffering we cannot bear.” *Pope John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae, 1995*