



**What is *euthanasia*?** *Euthanasia*, from the Greek words meaning 'good death', is something we do or fail to do which causes, or is intended to cause death, in order to remove a person from suffering. This is sometimes called 'mercy killing.'

**What is *assisted suicide*?** This refers to an act by which one assists another in taking his or her own life. A physician, for example, who engages in assisted suicide would, upon the patient's request, provide the deadly drugs for the person to use.

**What is the difference between *active* and *passive* euthanasia?** *Active euthanasia* refers to *an action one takes* to end a life, for example, a lethal injection. *Passive euthanasia* refers to *an omission* -- such as failing to intervene at a life-threatening crisis, or failing to provide nourishment.

**How are euthanasia and assisted suicide political issues?** The *first* purpose of government is to defend and protect the lives of the citizens, and both euthanasia and assisted suicide contradict that fundamental purpose. To move from the view that government has an *essential duty* to protect lives, to the view that it can choose to destroy (or permit the destruction) of life, is a "sea change" about which the US Catholic bishops have spoken in the following words: "The losers in this ethical sea change will be those who are elderly, poor, disabled and politically marginalized. None of these pass the utility test; and yet, they at least have a presence. They at least have the possibility of organizing to be heard. *Those who are unborn, infirm and terminally ill have no such advantage.* They have no "utility," and worse, they have no voice. As we tinker with the beginning, the end and even the intimate cell structure of life, we tinker with our own identity as a free nation dedicated to the dignity of the human person. When American political life becomes an experiment on people rather than for and by them, it will no longer be worth conducting. We are arguably moving closer to that day" (1998, *Living the Gospel of Life*, n.4)

**How do advocates of euthanasia and assisted suicide manipulate language to make their positions seem acceptable?** Advocates of euthanasia and assisted suicide advance their philosophy and legislative proposals by using terms such as "assist in dying," and "helping to die." This is carefully veiled language that, in a way very similar to the phrase "pro-choice," makes something which is very evil sound very good. (All above text found at [priestsforlife.org/euthanasia](http://priestsforlife.org/euthanasia))

**Natural death** is the only morally acceptable form of death. With natural care, one offers the dying patient food and water, and maintains body temperature and cleanliness. Comfort care involves a loving presence, palliation, and prayer. The physician may provide standard medical care such as oxygen, or intravenous fluids, or therapeutic pain medication, for example, to patients dying with lung cancer or end-stage heart or lung disease. The patient and family do have the right to refuse extra-ordinary measures, such as being placed on a mechanical ventilator, for example, when the end is clearly inevitable. Patients may make their wishes known while of sound mind through advance directives, such as living wills or a durable power of attorney for health care. The patient dies by natural processes, and the physician's role is to make the patient comfortable in their final hours. ([biblescripture.net](http://biblescripture.net))

#### **Suggested Monthly Penance**

Spend at least 15 mins in the open air, wind, sunshine or rain in God's beautiful creation.

*"Whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's"* (Rom 14:8). For those who live with this confidence, neither life nor death is absolute. We treasure God's gift of life; we also prepare ourselves for a time when we may let go of our lives, entrusting our future to the crucified and risen Christ who is *"Lord of both the dead and the living"* (Rom 14:9).

#### **Monthly Prayer**

Heavenly Father, we do not understand why anyone would voluntarily choose to end his/her life. We do not understand how one could help achieve this end. We place before you our prayer for guidance, open the hearts of those suffering that despite unbearable circumstances and pain, You are there with them. Let them feel Your love wash over them that they will choose life. We pray for all physicians, nurses, pharmacists, hospice workers and caregivers of all terminally ill patients. May they be guided by your precious love and direct those in the final days of treatment for those entrusted to their care. Through the intercession of St. Joseph, Patron Saint of a happy death, through Christ Our Lord – Amen

**Patron Saint of Assisted Suicide/Euthanasia** - St. Thomas Aquinas condemned suicide as wrong "because it contravenes one's duty to oneself and the natural inclination of self-perpetuation; because it injures other people and the community of which the individual is a part; and because it violates God's authority overlife, which is God's gift."

Please refer to the following websites for inforegarding Power of Attorney for Health Care, Advanced Directives, Indiana law on assisted suicide & enlightening info about organ donation/transplant:  
[www.patientsrightscouncil.org](http://www.patientsrightscouncil.org)  
[www.ncbcenter.org](http://www.ncbcenter.org)  
[www.lifeguardianfoundation.org](http://www.lifeguardianfoundation.org)

"Suicide is always as morally objectionable as murder. The Church's tradition has always rejected it as a gravely evil choice. To concur with the intention of another person to commit suicide and to help in carrying it out through so-called "assisted suicide" means to cooperate in, and at times to be the actual perpetrator of, an injustice which can never be excused, even if it is requested. In a remarkably relevant passage Saint Augustine writes that "it is never licit to kill another, even if he should wish it, indeed if he request it because, hanging between life and death, he begs for help in freeing the soul struggling against the bonds of the body and longing to be released: nor is it licit even when a sick person is no longer able to live." (The Gospel of Life, no. 66)

**Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for us.**

*Life Notes is a publication of the Holy Rosary Pro-Life Committee*