

Justice, Peace and Life

March 2016

“There’s a great move in contemporary society to make one’s worth and dignity synonymous with one’s ability to produce, achieve and be useful. When we move in that direction, the weak and the fragile will always be left behind.”
-Cardinal Timothy Dolan, Archdiocese of New York City

Now and At The Hour of Our Death...



As Catholics we believe in the sanctity of every human life, from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death. While we may not often consider end-of-life issues, now is the time to pay closer attention. Several states have already legalized physician-assisted suicide, and efforts are underway to do so in New York State as well.

Our Diocesan Public Policy Committee has chosen this as one of our education issues during the current legislative session. It seems unlikely that the bills that have been introduced will be voted on this year, but we know that they could be considered next year. Therefore, in concert with the New York State Catholic Conference, we have begun educating people on why we are opposed. We’ll continue to provide information on this issue over the coming months.

First, it’s important to know what physician assisted suicide (PAS) does NOT mean, so let’s start with some clarification on Catholic teaching on end-of-life medical treatment. In their document [Now and at the Hour of Our Death](#), our Catholic Bishops from New York State wrote:

Out of deep respect for the gift of life, we must always accept, and others must provide, ordinary medical means of preserving life. Ordinary means are those that offer us a reasonable hope of benefit and would not entail excessive burden on us, our family or the community. Ordinary means of medical treatment are morally obligatory. Withholding ordinary care with the intention of causing death is considered passive euthanasia and is always gravely contrary to God’s will.

But Catholics are not morally bound to prolong the dying process by using every medical treatment available. Allowing natural death to occur is not the same as killing. Some treatments may be considered “extraordinary” (as opposed to ordinary) and are not morally obligatory because the burdens and consequences are out of proportion to the beneficial results anticipated for a particular patient. These are considered morally optional treatments. (page 3, see full text [here](#))

PAS is not the same as allowing natural death to occur. Choosing not to undergo another round of chemotherapy at the end stage of cancer is not PAS. Administering narcotic pain medicine to a dying person with the intention of reducing her pain is not PAS. PAS means a physician facilitating a person’s death by providing the means and/or the information to enable that person to end her life.

PAS legislation is morally problematic in many ways, a few of which are: it endangers vulnerable elderly patients who may be coerced into taking their own lives; it provides no counseling for patients with clinical depression whose mental illness may be driving them to this action; it flies in the face of society’s suicide prevention efforts. Please start to learn about and pray about this issue so you can be an effective voice for the dignity of all human life. This [video](#) gives one of many compelling stories to inspire our efforts.

SAVE THE DATE....

2016 Diocesan Social Ministry Conference

*A day of learning
and discussion
for parish staff,
youth group leaders,
religious education teachers
and social ministry
volunteers*

**Saturday May 7, 2016
9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Notre Dame Retreat House
5151 Foster Road
Canandaigua, NY 14424**



\$15 registration fee, includes lunch and materials

Join the Lenten Fast for Climate Justice on March 25 (Good Friday), sponsored by the Global Catholic Climate Movement. **“Let’s pray and fast for the renewal of our relationship with creation and with our brothers and sisters in poverty who are already suffering the impacts of climate change.”** Sign up [here](#).



The Global Catholic
Climate Movement



Faithful
Citizenship

Are you registered to vote?

You have to be registered by **March 25** to vote in the New York State presidential primary on **April 19**. Please encourage others to register and vote as well. There are lots of way to do so, in person, by mail and on-line. For details see:

<http://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingRegister.html>

“participation in political life is a moral obligation”

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