



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On this Respect Life Sunday, we are invited to reflect on the sacredness and dignity of every human life.

This year, I want to draw your attention to an issue gaining momentum throughout the world and here in the United States: the legalization of assisted suicide. Legislation to make assisted suicide legal was passed in Illinois last year and has recently been proposed here in Wisconsin. It is an issue that deserves the attention of every Catholic.

The Catholic Church teaches that intentionally causing the death of an innocent person is always wrong, regardless of the circumstances or the person's condition. Our lives are gifts from God, and our worth does not depend upon our health, independence, productivity, or ability to avoid suffering. We remain beloved sons and daughters of God when we are seriously ill, disabled, elderly, or approaching death.

For this reason, the Church cannot support assisted suicide. At the same time, our response must be about more than public policy. We must ask: How can we better accompany people who are suffering and support those who are caring for them?

When someone is facing serious or terminal illness, that person needs to know that he or she is not a burden. Families need support. Patients need compassionate medical care, including appropriate palliative and hospice care, that seeks to relieve suffering while respecting the dignity of the person. No one should feel that death is the only way to escape pain, loneliness, or fear.

We know that suffering and death do not have the final word. Jesus Christ entered fully into human suffering and death, and through his Resurrection transformed them. In Christ, even the hour of death is illuminated by the promise of eternal life.

I encourage every Catholic to take time to learn more about assisted suicide and the Church's teaching on human dignity, compassionate care, and end-of-life decisions. Throughout October, the Archdiocese of Milwaukee will offer information and opportunities for reflection, including presentations at parishes throughout the archdiocese. Watch our social media and your parish bulletin for details, and visit the archdiocese website to learn more.

Join me in praying for all who face serious illness, those who care for them, and those who mourn the loss of a loved one. May the Lord give us the courage and compassion to protect life, accompany those who suffer, and proclaim with confidence the hope of the Resurrection.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Jeffrey S. Grob
Archbishop of Milwaukee

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