

Justice, Peace and Life

November 2019

“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.

At the recommendation of our Diocesan Public Policy Committee Bishop Matano has chosen as this our diocesan advocacy issue for 2020. Parishes will be collecting signatures in opposition to the legalization of physician-assisted suicide during Public Policy Weekend in February.

In the meantime, there are important things to remember. 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 at www.nyscatholicconference.org)

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 and disabled 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 advocate for life.

Kids Need To Eat In Order To Learn

**Let's make it easier,
not harder, for them to
get free school lunches**



U.S. Department of Agriculture/Flickr

From our US Catholic Bishops: **Speak Out for Children!**

Last month, the US. Conference of Catholic Bishops spoke out against a proposed rule that limited eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—formerly called Food Stamps), our nation's foremost anti-hunger program. While it was initially believed that up to 500,000 children would lose direct certification for free school meals as a result of this proposed rule, the Department of Agriculture recently released information that up to **982,000** children would no longer be directly certified for school meals. Because this data was left out of the Department's initial impact analysis of the proposed rule, the public comment period is once again open to allow input on this new information.

Direct certification for school meals reduces paperwork for both parents and school systems and saves families from paying for school meals, which can be difficult for many, even at a reduced rate. Taking away this vital resource puts children's growth, development, and ability to learn at risk.

Be sure to make your message personal—include a few sentences about what you've seen as a teacher, nurse, youth minister, parent etc. about why kids need to have lunch in order to learn and flourish in school, and why it's a bad/immoral notion that we should end this automatic eligibility.

Submit your comments at www.votervoice.net/USCCB/home

**BUY
NOTHING
DAY:
Friday
November 29**

*Join the movement
to **NOT SHOP** on
Thanksgiving or the
day after.*

*Don't feed into the
joyless, angry frenzy
of consumption.*

*Don't support the
corporations that
force their low-wage
workers to come into
work on Thanksgiving.*

*Instead, pray, play
and spend time with
your family, friends
and low income
neighbors.*

**The More
We Consume
The Less
We Live**

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