

# Justice, Peace and Life

January 2017

***“The human person is always precious, even if marked by illness or old age.” -Pope Francis***

**Make Your Voice Heard:**  
Death with dignity means proper care,  
not a lethal drug dose.

**PUBLIC POLICY WEEKEND  
FEBRUARY 4 AND 5**



Please ensure that your parish participates in gathering signatures as part of our Diocesan-wide Public Policy Weekend effort to **stop the legalization of physician assisted suicide** in our state. The petition reads:

*To New York State Governor Cuomo/New York State Senator/New York State Assembly Member:  
I strongly oppose any legislation to legalize assisted suicide in New York State. Allowing doctors to prescribe a lethal dose for patients to end their lives devalues human life. There is also significant potential for abuse. I urge you to focus instead on improving palliative care, to ensure compassionate, comprehensive care and pain management for those who are terminally ill. We need to accompany rather than abandon them.*

***We don't discourage suicide by assisting suicide.***

**Excerpted from: Every Suicide Is Tragic.**

<http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/respect-life-program/2016/every-suicide-is-tragic.cfm>

## **DOCTOR-ASSISTED SUICIDE ESCALATES SUICIDE**

Advocates of assisted suicide claim it is a private decision, an exercise in personal autonomy that does not affect others. But there is a well-studied "social contagion" aspect to the behavior that can't be ignored.

A recent study, which controlled for other factors that could account for the rise, showed that the permissive assisted suicide laws in Oregon and Washington have caused at least a 6% rise in overall suicide rates in those states. Additional data, although limited, enhances this distressing picture. After suicide rates had declined in Oregon in the 1990s, they rose dramatically there between 2000 and 2010—the years following the legalization of assisted suicide in 1997. By 2012, suicide rates in Oregon were 42% higher than the national average.

We know that suicide is among the health-related behaviors that tend to spread from person to person. When a person ends his or her life, it can affect the choices of that person's friends, as well as the choices of people at least three degrees of separation away: the friends of his or her friends' friends. Additionally, publicized cases of suicide lead to clusters of copycat cases—known in social science as the Werther Effect. A 2003 Swiss study, for example, showed evidence of suicide contagion following media reports of doctor-assisted suicide. No one is an island.

## **LEGALIZING DOCTOR-ASSISTED SUICIDE WRONGLY COMMUNICATES THAT SOME LIVES ARE NOT WORTH LIVING**

Finally, the law itself is a teacher. Our laws shape cultural attitudes toward certain behaviors and influence social norms. Laws permitting assisted suicide communicate the message that, under especially difficult circumstances, some lives are not worth living. This tragically false message will be heard not only by those with a terminal illness, but by any person struggling with the temptation to end his or her life.



**Catholic Climate Covenant**<sup>sm</sup>  
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

The Catholic Climate Covenant urges Catholics to sign the following petition to the incoming president: [www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/trumppetition](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/trumppetition)  
White House comment line: 202-456-1111

Dear President Trump,  
As members of the Catholic community in the United States, we are praying that your presidency may be blessed with wisdom and compassion. **As you take office, we urge you to demonstrate bold leadership in addressing the climate crisis by honoring the Paris Agreement, contributing to the Green Climate Fund, and implementing the Clean Power Plan.**

Because climate change is already harming millions of people across the U.S. and around the globe, Pope Francis has called national leaders to work together to address this crisis. Similarly, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) strongly supports a national carbon pollution standard as essential to effective implementation of the Paris Agreement.

In order to limit the impacts of climate change on creation and on the human family, we urge you to:

1. Maintain the United States' moral leadership on climate change by honoring the **Paris Agreement** (COP21) and taking swift action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions between 26 and 28 percent compared with 2005 levels by 2025;
2. Support sustainable development and address the underlying causes of migration by honoring the United States' initial pledge of \$3 billion and further supporting the **Green Climate Fund** to help poor countries adapt to the effects of climate change;
3. Support job creation and economic opportunity by encouraging states to craft plans to reach and exceed their **Clean Power Plan** carbon reduction goals by transitioning to renewable energy sources like wind and solar power and enacting energy efficiency and conservation standards.

An overwhelming majority of Catholics in the United States (73 percent) believe that government needs to do more to address the issue of climate change – a sentiment repeatedly expressed by Pope Francis and our Bishops.

As the leader of the most powerful country in the world, you have a critical role to play in solving this crisis. **We urge you to take swift and meaningful action before it is too late.**

**Saturday January 21-Sunday January 29:**

*9 Days for Life is an annual period of prayer and action focused on cherishing the gift of every person's life.*

PRAY for the respect and protection of each person's life;  
GATHER together in prayer, action, and fellowship with others;  
SHARE your stories online!

You can receive the novena prayers online, via text message or on the web. The novena intentions include an end to abortion, the death penalty and domestic violence; and that those near the end of their lives receive medical care that respects their dignity and protects their lives.

<http://www.usccb.org/about/pro-life-activities/january-roe-events/2017-9-days-for-life-novena.cfm>

**9 DAYS FOR LIFE**  
PRAYER • PENANCE • PILGRIMAGE

**Justice & Peace Ministry Staff of Catholic Charities:**

**Monroe** 585-546-7220 Marvin Mich ext. 7021; MMich@cfcrochester.org / Ruth Marchetti ext.7099; RMarchetti@cfcrochester.org

**Chemung/Schuyler/Tioga** Kathy Dubel 607-734-9784 ext. 2135; KDubel@dor.org

**Cayuga/Ontario/ Seneca/Wayne/Yates** Deacon Greg Kiley 315-789-2235 ext. 124; GKiley@dor.org

**Tompkins** Laurie Konwinski 607-272-5062 ext. 12; LKonwinski@dor.org

**Livingston** Tabitha Brewster 585-658-4466 ext. 13; TBrewster@dor.org

**Steuben** Lynda Lowin 607-776-8085 ext. 217; LLowin@dor.org

**Diocesan Life Issues Coordinator:** Suzanne Stack 585-328-3210 ext. 1304; SStack@dor.org