

## ***LIFE: PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE***

Everything is connected; everyone is connected. We are a caring community where everyone is meant to be connected. We are meant to be interdependent, a community, a caring community. We are responsible for one another. Life is not about me; it's about us.

Life is also our first gift from an infinitely loving Creator. That alone provides the foundation for our human dignity. Catholic teaching recognizes the inherent value of all human life. Each of us – regardless of age, race, physical or mental ability, or economic status – is inherently valuable. No stage of life is insignificant. None is a burden. Instead, it's all very good, as we learn in Genesis when, on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, God looked at everything he made and found it very good.



This is why the Catholic Church believes that we must protect the environment, that we must ensure that everyone has dignity, and that we must protect life – because these are gifts from God that are very good.

We cherish these gifts. Therefore, regarding the gift of life, the Church opposes state-assisted suicide – which is also known as capital punishment or the death penalty – so does the Church oppose physician-assisted suicide, which some soften by calling it death with dignity.

We must protect all gifts of life, because life is very good. As a caring community of connected, interdependent neighbors, we therefore mourn the loss of a life from one's own suicide, from state-assisted suicide, or from physician-assisted suicide. A connected, caring community is, by definition, compassionate, especially with those facing the most vulnerable time in their lives.

This compassion does not equate with facilitating suicide. This compassion does not require us to look the other way when suicide is being considered. This compassion does not mean that we legalize suicide because "everyone has a right to make their own decisions."

No, this compassion requires us to be present with each other until the end.

All lives are valuable, significant, and a gift of God, which God found very good.