

# New Mexico Conference of Catholic Bishops



August 13, 2015

## Statement on Physician Assisted Suicide

The Bishops of New Mexico are thankful to God that the Court of Appeals of New Mexico reversed the lower court's approval of physician assisted suicide.

The Catholic Church strongly believes that life is a gift from a loving God which extends from conception to natural death. Only God can give or take life and the state does not have the competency to shorten this precious gift, even for seemingly laudable purposes. While each stage of life is sacred, the end of life is filled with special meaning and opportunities.

Our Church, given its long history of operating and sponsoring hospitals, ministering to those in pain and providing spiritual services to the dying, is in a unique position to shed light on our country's debate on assisted suicide and to offer insights that point to the dignity and sacredness of the dying process. All too often, our society sees pain as the enemy while in fact suffering often accompanies genuine growth and new opportunities. The answer to suffering is not death but rather the grateful acceptance of life while at the same time managing pain through proper medications and the support of loved ones. Furthermore, the Church sees the process of dying as a communal event in which loved ones and the faith community also find new life, reconciliation, hope and strength as they accompany the dying person in his or her final days.

We Catholic bishops of New Mexico affirm our Church's proper use of the word "compassion." Compassion invites us all to journey with our loved ones as they prepare for eternal life, sharing and easing their suffering as we assure them that we are with them every step of the way. Cutting that journey short is not compassionate; rather, it is allowing suffering to blind us to the meaning of life. Christ showed what true compassion is when he died for us that we might live forever with him in heaven. The way to prepare for that ultimate reality is to live our lives as fully as possible until God calls us home.

In Christ,  
The New Mexico Conference of Catholic Bishops

*Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Most Rev. John C. Wester*  
*Diocese of Gallup, Most Rev. James S. Wall*  
*Diocese of Las Cruces, Most Rev. Oscar Cantú, S.T.D.*

Contact: Allen Sánchez, Executive Director, NMCCB, 505.319.3334