

Life Matters - Euthanasia

How do we define it?

EUTHANASIA (mercy killing) as defined by the Merriam Webster dictionary is the act or practice of killing someone who is very sick or injured to prevent any more suffering.

**Voluntary Euthanasia* is when the person who is killed has requested to be killed.

**Non-voluntary Euthanasia* is when the person who is killed made no request and gave no consent.

**Involuntary Euthanasia* is when the person who is killed made an expressed wish to the contrary.

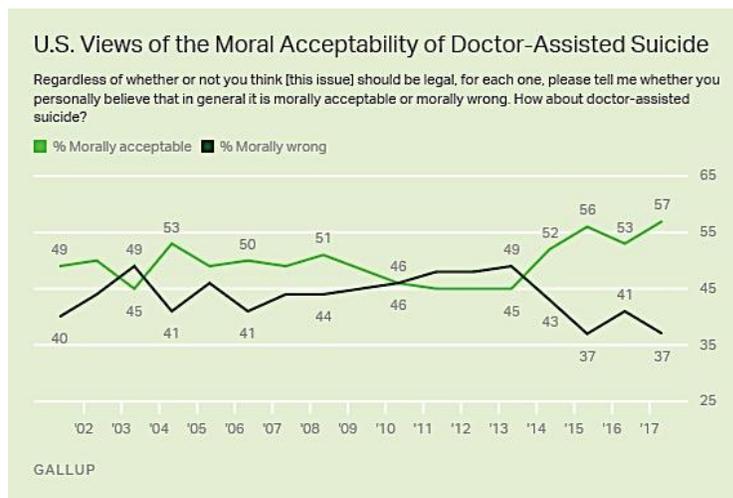
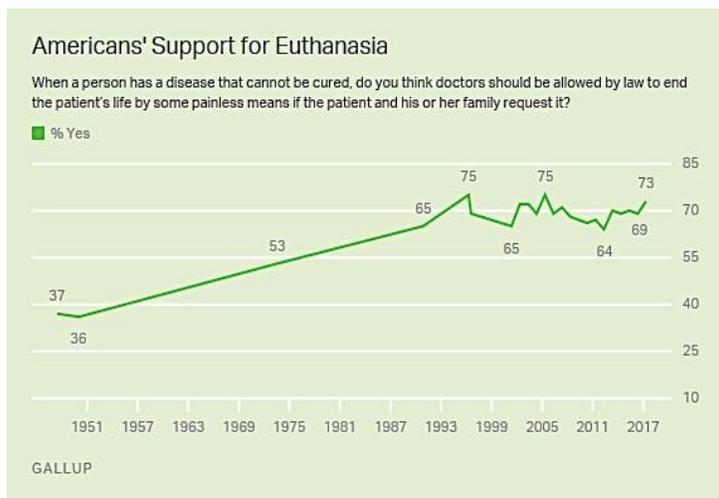
**Assisted Suicide* is when someone provides an individual with the guidance, and means to take his/her own life with the intention that they will be used for this purpose. When it is a doctor who helps another person to kill themselves, it is called “physician assisted suicide”.

Where do we stand at the Federal Level?

The Federal Government prohibits euthanasia under general homicide laws and does not have assisted suicide laws. Euthanasia laws are argued and passed on the state level.

States who currently hold euthanasia laws include: California, District of Columbia, Colorado, Vermont, Washington State, Montana, Oregon and New Mexico. **All other states are currently looking at End of Life Legislation.**

How do we change the statistics?



Source: <http://news.gallup.com/poll/211928/majority-americans-remain-supportive-euthanasia.aspx>

- 73% support euthanasia, highest level since 2005
- Liberals most supportive; weekly churchgoers least supportive
- A new high of 57% say doctor-assisted suicide is morally acceptable

Is Iceland Now God?

In an article written in the Pregnancy Help News, it states “Iceland has become the first nation to boast that it has eradicated down syndrome.”¹ Where is the boast? Is Downs Syndrome, a genetic disorder, now reduced to a disease that needs to be removed completely from this earth? When did Iceland decide that babies, predisposed in the womb with this genetic disorder, no longer deserved to live? And yet, they are not alone in this new euthanistic battle. “This deadly discrimination against babies with disabilities is a



problem in countries across the world, not just Iceland. In 2014, the Danish government reported 98 percent of unborn babies who tested positive for Down syndrome were aborted. CBS reports the rate in France was 77 percent in 2015, 90 percent in the United Kingdom and 67 percent in the U.S. between 1995 and 2011. Some put the rate even higher in the United States, but it is difficult to determine the exact number because the U.S. government does not keep detailed statistics about abortion.”²

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father." - Matthew 18:10

Should not God decide who lives and dies and Him alone? God sees not just our outside appearance, but sees what is also in our hearts. What humans see as an imperfection, God has established with a purpose. It is sometimes the imperfections among us that help us to strive and make our greatest achievements. Dave McElhinny will let you know what a joy it is to have a Down Syndrome child in life. At the end of his article in a recent North Hills Journal he states, “Ask any person with Down Syndrome if they are happy they were born and if they love their lives. I promise you those numbers will be the exact opposite of the Iceland philosophy.”³

¹Bilger, Micaiah. “Iceland Claims to Have ‘Eradicated’ Down Syndrome by Aborting Every Baby Who Had It.” *LifeNews.com*, 17 Aug. 2017, www.lifeneews.com/2017/08/15/iceland-claims-to-have-eradicated-down-syndrome-by-aborting-every-baby-who-had-it/.

²Lajka, Julian Quinones Arijeta. “What Kind of Society Do You Want to Live in?": Inside the Country Where Down Syndrome Is Disappearing.” *CBS News*, CBS Interactive, 14 Aug. 2017, www.cbsnews.com/news/down-syndrome-iceland/.

³McElhinny, Dave. “The 21st Century’s Secret Genocide.” *TribLIVE.com*, 11 Sept. 2017, triblive.com/local/northhills/12656774-74/the-21st-century-s-secret-genocide.

Catholic Church Teaching issued by:

THE SACRED CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH (05/05/1980)

II. EUTHANASIA

In ancient times EUTHANASIA meant an EASY DEATH without severe suffering. Today, one thinks of some intervention of medicine whereby the suffering of sickness or of the final agony are reduced, sometimes also with the danger of suppressing life prematurely. Ultimately the word EUTHANASIA is used to mean “mercy killing” for the purpose of putting an end to extreme suffering or having abnormal babies, the mentally ill or the incurably sick from the prolongation, perhaps for many years of a miserable life, imposing too heavy a burden on their families or society.

It is necessary to state firmly again that nothing and no one can in any way permit the killing of an innocent human being, whether a fetus or an embryo, an infant or an adult, an old person, or one suffering from an incurable disease, or a person who is dying. Furthermore, no one is permitted to ask for this act of killing, either for himself or herself, or for another person entrusted to his or her care, nor can he or she consent to it either explicitly or implicitly. Nor can any authority legitimately recommend or permit such an action. For it is a question of the violation of the Divine Law, an offense against human dignity, a crime against life, and an attack on humanity.

It may happen that, by reason of prolonged and barely tolerable pain, for deeply personal or other reasons, people may be led to believe that they can legitimately ask for death or obtain it for others. Although in these cases the guilt of the individual may be reduced or completely absent. Nevertheless, the error of judgement into which the conscience falls, perhaps in good faith, does not change the nature of this act of killing, which will always be in itself something to be rejected. The pleas of gravely ill people who sometimes ask for death are not to be understood as implying a true desire for euthanasia; in fact, it is almost always a case of an anguished plea for help and love. What a sick person needs, besides medical care, is love, the human and supernatural warmth with which the sick person can and ought to be surrounded by all those close to him or her, parents and children, doctors and nurses.

DECLARATION ON EUTHANASIA

While various organizations and individuals have misquoted and twisted Catholic Church teaching to confuse Catholics, the Catholic Church has always condemned Euthanasia/Assisted Suicide. The new Catechism (No. 2276-2279) provides a succinct explanation of our Catholic teaching.

2276 Those whose lives are diminished/weakened deserve special respect. Sick or handicapped persons should be helped to lead lives as normal as possible.

2277 ...direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons, it is morally unacceptable. Thus, an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator... and must always be forbidden and excluded.

2278 Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate. It is the refusal of "over-zealous" treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted. The decisions should be made by the patient if he is competent and able or, if not, not those legally entitled to act for the patient, whose reasonable will and legitimate interests must always be respected.

2279 Even if death is thought imminent, the ordinary care owed to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted. The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even at the risk of shortening their days can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable. Palliative care is a special form of disinterested charity. As such it should be encouraged.

We are the St. Alexis Pro-life Committee. Please join us each first Monday of the month after the 8 AM Mass in the Parish Center.