



EVERY SUICIDE IS TRAGIC

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 1:27 | Deuteronomy 30:19-20, 31:6 | Psalm 34:18-19; Psalm 143:11 | Jeremiah 29:11-12 | Isaiah 66:13 | Galatians 6:2 | Romans 12:15

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

1004; 2276-2283; 2447-2448

FROM THE POPES

- Pope St. John Paul II. *Evangelium vitae (The Gospel of Life)*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995. 47, 64-67.
- Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. *Declaration on Euthanasia*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 1980.

USCCB RESOURCES

- **To Live Each Day with Dignity**
www.usccb.org/ToLiveEachDay
- **To Live Each Day with Dignity: A Statement on Physician-Assisted Suicide**
Booklet. 15 pp. Item #1172.
- **Killing the Pain, Not the Patient: Palliative Care vs. Assisted Suicide**
Available online only. (Listed under “Select Educational Articles” on www.usccb.org/ToLiveEachDay)
- **Life Matters: Doctor-Assisted Death by Suicide**
8-panel brochure. Item #1243.
Spanish Item #1253.
- **Assisted Suicide Laws in Oregon and Washington: What Safeguards?**
Fact sheet. Available online only. (Listed under “Fact Sheets” on www.usccb.org/ToLiveEachDay)

USCCB VIDEO RESOURCES

View at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/assisted-suicide/to-live-each-day/assisted-suicide-videos.cfm>

- **Luke’s Story: Every Suicide is Tragic**
Luke Maxwell, 19, survived an attempt to take his own life, and reminds us that every life is worth living. You don’t discourage suicide by assisting suicide.
- **John’s Story: Beyond Independence**
Born without arms, John Foppe speaks to a way of life beyond independence, namely inter-dependence.
- **Maggie’s Story**
Maggie was diagnosed with brain cancer and strongly opposed assisted suicide. Although she passed away peacefully in 2015, her powerful story continues to inspire hope and courage.
- **Jeanette’s Story: 15 Years Later**
When Oregon resident, Jeanette Hall, had less than a year to live, she asked her cancer doctor for the pills to commit suicide. Dr. Kenneth Stevens got to know her better, and inspired her to consider treatment. Now, 15 years later, Jeanette says, “It’s great to be alive!”

SAINTS

- **St. Francis of Assisi:** Patron saint of peace
- **St. Jude Thaddeus:** Patron saint of impossible causes
- **St. John of God:** Patron saint of those who are sick

REAL PEOPLE, REAL LIFE:

- “Barbara had been in remission from her lung cancer. When it recurred, her oncologist wanted her to be given a drug that (statistically) would increase the chance of her being alive in one year



TRUE COMPASSION ALLEVIATES SUFFERING WHILE MAINTAINING SOLIDARITY WITH THOSE WHO SUFFER. IT DOES NOT PUT LETHAL DRUGS IN THEIR HANDS AND ABANDON THEM TO THEIR SUICIDAL IMPULSES.



by 45%. The State of Oregon denied this treatment stating that her prognosis wasn't good enough to warrant expensive medication to treat her cancer. Yet, in the same letter denying coverage for her medication, the State offered full coverage (100%) for her assisted suicide."¹⁴

- Luke Maxwell, 19, survived an attempt to take his own life. He shares, "When someone is standing...on the edge, ready to jump, what's the natural human response? It's to pull them back. With assisted suicide, the message is 'go ahead, jump.' ...Every suicide is tragic—whether you're old or young, healthy or sick, your life is precious where you are and is worth living."¹⁵
- Born without arms, John Foppe speaks to a way of life beyond independence, namely interdependence:

"We live in a world [in which], all too often, our self-worth is bound up in what we can *do*. ... As a disabled person, I've been very tuned into this whole idea of independence: 'I don't need anybody's help'...And yeah, I get that on a certain level. But nobody's totally ever completely independent. None of us live on an island. We need each other.

...Everybody has *something* in their life. And some of those conditions make us feel broken or incomplete... But a life also yields a lot of joy, a lot of opportunity to give and to be generous and to love and to be loved. And you only do that by having the courage to step into life."¹⁶

DID YOU KNOW?

- "When a patient says *I want to die*, it may simply mean *I feel useless*. When a patient says *I don't want to be a burden*, it may really be a question, *Am I a burden?* When a patient says *I've lived a long life already*, she may really be saying *I'm tired. I'm afraid I can't keep going*. And finally, when a patient says *I might as well be dead*, he may really be saying *No one cares about me*. Many studies show that assisted suicide requests are almost always for such psychological or social reasons."¹⁷
- The root meaning of the word "compassion" "is to 'suffer with' another person. True compassion alleviates suffering while maintaining solidarity with those who suffer. It does not put lethal drugs in their hands and abandon them to their suicidal impulses."¹⁸

INTERCESSIONS

For those who struggle to find meaning in their lives: May they find hope and reassurance in Christ through the loving support of friends and family; We pray to the Lord:

RELATED WORKS OF MERCY

- Visit the sick.
- Feed the hungry.
- Give drink to the thirsty.
- Counsel the doubtful.
- Comfort the sorrowful.
- Pray for the living and the dead.

¹⁴ William L, Toffler, MD, *Life Matters: Doctor-Assisted Death by Suicide*. (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2012).

¹⁵ Patients Rights Action Fund, "Luke's Story", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iik3B0Cofc0> (accessed June 10, 2016).

¹⁶ Patients Rights Action Fund, "John's Story: Beyond Independence", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uY2VQgUzPs0> (accessed June 10, 2016).

¹⁷ William L, Toffler, MD, *Life Matters: Doctor-Assisted Death by Suicide*. (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2012).

¹⁸ USCCB, *To Live Each Day with Dignity: A Statement on Physician-Assisted Suicide* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishop, 2011).