

May the lives of those nearing death be valued and protected until God calls them home.



## PRAYERS

*Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be*

## REFLECTION

With every Hail Mary that we pray, we ask our Holy Mother to intercede for us “now and at the hour of our death.” Today, there is a growing desire to control the timing of death, rather than entrusting this sacred hour to God and His loving plan for us. St. John Paul II tells us that “what really happens in this case is that the individual is overcome and crushed by a death deprived of any prospect of meaning or hope” (*Evangelium vitae*, 15). While those nearing the end of life may experience feelings of fear and anxiety, God’s grace abounds in these final moments of life. We are called to accompany those preparing to enter eternal life, recalling that Christ has walked this path before us and remains with us always! Psalm 23 tells us, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me.” Christ, the Good Shepherd, never abandons us, walking with us through death and into eternal life with Him. As St. Ambrose said at the funeral for his own brother, “Death is, then, no cause for mourning,

for it is the cause of mankind's salvation” (*Spe salvi*, 10). May we recall these words as we accompany loved ones nearing the end of their lives.

## ACTS OF REPARATION *(choose one)*

- Offer one or more of these end-of-life prayers for the sick and dying: [www.bit.ly/sick-dying-prayers](http://www.bit.ly/sick-dying-prayers).
- Visit and spend time with an elderly person in your life. It could be a relative, a member of your parish, or someone at a local nursing home.
- Offer some other sacrifice, prayer, or act of penance that you feel called to do for this month’s intention.

## ONE STEP FURTHER

Learn more about how to [Live Each Day With Dignity](#) through the many resources offered on palliative care and assisted suicide.

## DID YOU KNOW?

There are many ways to tenderly care for a loved one approaching the transition from this life to the next. Read “Caring for Loved Ones at Life’s End” to learn some of them: [usccb.org/endoflifecare](http://usccb.org/endoflifecare)



*Image: A mosaic of Our Lady of Guadalupe decorates a side altar in the Church of Santa Maria della Famiglia at the Vatican. Dec. 15. (CNS photo/Paul Haring).*

