

respect life novena



DAY 6

INTERCESSION

May all who are ill or nearing death receive care that meets all their needs and upholds the gift of their lives.

PRAYERS

Our Father, 3 Hail Marys, Glory Be

REFLECTION

When faced with serious illness, some people, in desperation, tragically seek to end their lives through assisted suicide. But they typically don't want to die. Their pursuit of assisted suicide is usually rooted in fears of helplessness, pain, or dependency. They may fear being perceived as a "burden" by their family. The patient requesting assisted suicide is often asking, "Does anyone want me to be alive, or care enough to talk me out of this request and support me through this difficult time?" Assisted suicide offers only false compassion and a misguided sense of mercy. Rather than addressing the patients' problems, assisted suicide cruelly eliminates the life of a patient in need of authentic care.

Instead, people who are ill or dying should receive care that meets their needs and upholds the gift of their lives. Palliative care (which is not limited to the dying process) and hospice care embody a comprehensive and integrated approach that seeks to provide physical, psychological, social, familial, and spiritual support for those who are sick or dying. We need to surround those going through serious illness or the dying process with love, support, and companionship that are "anchored in unconditional respect for their human dignity, beginning with respect for the inherent value of their lives."* Every life is worth living.

ACTS OF REPARATION *(choose one)*

- Look for ways to incorporate small acts of service throughout your day: let someone go ahead of you in line, complete a chore for a family member, exercise patience while in traffic, text a friend to let them know you are praying for their intentions, or take time to ask how a coworker is doing and listen attentively.
- Pray "Every Life is Worth Living" (usccb.org/every-life-worth-living) for all who are sick, suffering, or near death.
- Offer some other sacrifice, prayer, or act of penance that you feel called to do for today's intention.

ONE STEP FURTHER

In 2020, the Vatican released the letter *Samaritanus bonus*, "on the care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life." The letter reaffirms the Church's teaching on care for those who are critically ill or dying and offers additional guidance for increasingly complex situations at the end of life. Learn more about how we are called to care for those who are seriously ill or nearing death in "The Witness of the Good Samaritan: Palliative Care and Hospice" (bit.ly/witness-good-samaritan).

*Excerpt from *To Live Each Day with Dignity: A Statement on Physician-Assisted Suicide*. Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. 2011.