

Letter  
of the Congregation for the  
Doctrine of the Faith

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# *Samaritanus bonus*

on the care of persons in the  
critical and terminal phases of life

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## STUDY GUIDE



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

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# FOREWORD

The Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued the letter *Samaritanus bonus*, “on the care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life,” in September of 2020. The letter reaffirms the Church's teaching on care for those who are critically ill or dying and offers additional pastoral guidance for increasingly complex situations at the end of life. It brings together many of the Church's teaching documents and provides a succinct overview of the Catholic call to protect human life, especially when it nears its end.

# HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

This study guide is designed to be used in small or large group settings to discuss and reflect on the letter from the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith *Samaritanus bonus*, “on the care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life.” It can be used in conjunction with either the “*Samaritanus bonus: A Compendium*” or with the **full document**. This study guide provides Scripture passages, prayers, and discussion questions to help participants reflect more deeply on *Samaritanus bonus* and its central themes and teachings.

We recommend meeting once a week or once every other week for 60 to 90 minutes. This study guide is divided into six sessions, and each session follows the same basic format:

- ◆ OPENING PRAYER
- ◆ REVIEW
- ◆ SCRIPTURE READING
- ◆ DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
- ◆ CLOSING PRAYER
- ◆ ANNOUNCEMENTS

Depending on what your timeframe permits, participants can come to each session having already read the designated material for that gathering, or you can decide to read the material together. The study guide is ideal for use in parish ministry studies, diocesan or parish pro-life meetings, high school theology classes, youth or young adult studies, adult faith formation series, Catholic book clubs, and more! And while specifically designed to help facilitate group studies, individuals can also use this tool on their own to increase their understanding of the Church’s teachings on end-of-life care.

We encourage you to adapt this tool to best serve your needs and those of your particular group or community. While a basic framework is provided, you can make adjustments as necessary. If distance or other factors prevent you from meeting in person, consider meeting via video chat. Perhaps, in addition to the closing prayer, you may also want to invite members to offer personal prayer intentions, as well. Feel free to customize this study to make it the most helpful for your particular group.

# BEST PRACTICES

While we encourage you to adapt this study as needed, some basic best practices are provided to help guide you.

## ◆ DESIGNATE A FACILITATOR.

One person should be selected as the “leader” of your group study. This person helps facilitate discussion and keep it on topic, sends reminders to group members, makes announcements, and completes any other tasks needed to make the study meaningful and fruitful for all participants.

## ◆ PRACTICE HOSPITALITY.

Take steps to make everyone to feel welcome and comfortable. Greet group members as they arrive and try to anticipate any specific needs as best you can. For example, if you’re meeting in person, help them find a place to set down their coats or purses. Have pens and paper available for those who might like to take notes. Simple gestures such as this extend a sense of hospitality and welcome. If your meeting space allows for it and you have the resources, consider making light refreshments available. Perhaps group members would want to take turns bringing in something to share. While refreshments certainly aren’t necessary, having coffee, sodas, or juice and light snacks can make your time together even more enjoyable.

## ◆ BUILD RELATIONSHIPS.

Make a point to get to know one another and build relationships. At your first gathering, have everyone introduce and share a little about themselves. As you continue to meet, consider having an opening “ice breaker” in which all members take turns answering a new question. For example, maybe you want to start your gathering by asking each person to share a “rose” and “thorn” from their week: some blessing or exciting news and a challenge or something they would like prayers for. You can also do fun questions like: *What place would you most like to visit and why? What’s your favorite movie? What food could you not live without?* And so on.

## ◆ BEGIN AND END ON TIME.

We recommend that you keep your sessions to 60 or 90 minutes. Whichever length you choose, be sure to keep the gathering running on time out of respect for all participants. While some members may want to chat before or after the specified meeting time, be sure to keep the formal study session within the agreed upon timeframe.

## ◆ KEEP THE MEETING LOCATION CONSISTENT.

When possible, keep your meeting location consistent. This provides familiarity and reliability to group members. If the location does need to change, be sure to make announcements, send out reminders, and provide clear directions for the alternate location. You might also consider posting a sign in the usual location directing to the new location for people who might miss the message.

◆ ALLOW TIME FOR SILENCE.

In a group setting, silence can often feel a little awkward or uncomfortable. But often, silence is needed to allow participants to collect their thoughts, reflect more deeply, or even gather the courage to share what is on their hearts. Silence can also help foster openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit. Explain to group members that pauses in the discussion are natural and that you'll all become more accustomed to silence throughout the study.

◆ LET THE HOLY SPIRIT LEAD.

In addition to asking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the opening prayer, continue to let him lead throughout the session. For example, sometimes your group may spend more time on a particular topic or discussion question than on others. Perhaps something specific is resonating with your group. You may not be able to get to all the discussion questions, and that is okay. Allow the Holy Spirit to help you discern what to spend more time on and when it may be best to move on to the next question. Additionally, extra discussion questions can be found in the appendix, in case you would like to dive into a topic more deeply.



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# OPENING PRAYER

*To be prayed at the beginning of each session.*

Heavenly Father,  
As we come together to study and meditate upon *Samaritanus bonus*,  
we ask you to send your Holy Spirit to open our hearts and minds to your truth.  
Grant us your wisdom and understanding  
as we seek a deeper appreciation for your gift of life, from its beginning until its natural end.  
May our time together help us to grow in love and knowledge of you,  
and help us respond to your promptings.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
St. Joseph, patron of a happy death, pray for us.  
Amen.

# CLOSING PRAYER

*To be prayed at the end of each session.*

Grant, O Lord of life,  
That we may savor every season of our lives  
as a gift filled with promise for the future.

Grant that we may lovingly accept your will,  
and place ourselves each day in your merciful  
hands.

And when the moment of our definitive  
“passage” comes,  
grant that we may face it with serenity,  
without regret for what we shall leave behind.

For in meeting you,  
after having sought you for so long,  
we shall find once more every authentic good

which we have known here on earth,  
in the company of all who have gone before us  
marked with the sign of faith and hope.

Mary, Mother of pilgrim humanity,  
pray for us “now and at the hour of our death.”

Keep us ever close to Jesus,  
your beloved Son and our brother,  
the Lord of life and glory.  
Amen!

Pope John Paul II, *Letter to the Elderly*, 18 © 1999, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City. Used with permission. All rights reserved.



# SESSION ONE

## *Samaritanus bonus*: Introduction & Section I

### READING

*Introduction*

*I. Care for One's Neighbor*

### OPENING PRAYER

*See page 7.*

### REVIEW

*Invite one person to provide a brief summary of the readings for this session. This can be the group facilitator or any member of the group.*

### SCRIPTURE READING

*Ask one member of the group to read the following Scripture passage aloud. When he or she is finished, take a few moments to silently reflect on the Scripture passage.*

#### ***Luke 10:30-37***

[30] Jesus replied, “A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. [31] <sup>\*</sup>A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. [32] Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. [33] But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. [34] He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. [35] The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, ‘Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.’ [36] Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?” [37] He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

\* [10:31–32] Priest...Levite: those religious representatives of Judaism who would have been expected to be models of “neighbor” to the victim pass him by.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What inspired you to want to read and study *Samaritanus bonus*? What are you hoping to get out of this document study?

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2. What do you think the witness of the Good Samaritan teaches us about caring for others at the end of their lives?

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3. *Samaritanus bonus* acknowledges that we can often find it difficult to recognize the profound value of human life when we are confronted with great suffering, weakness, and fragility, *despite our best efforts*. Can you think of a time that you personally experienced this challenge? If so, were you able to recognize God working in that situation, whether at the time or when reflecting back?

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4. *Samaritanus bonus* speaks of a “*contemplative gaze*” that beholds each human person as a *unique and unrepeatable wonder*, to be welcomed as *gift* from God. How do you think adopting a “contemplative gaze” changes how we see and treat one another, and even ourselves?

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5. According to the document, what is our responsibility when a cure is impossible, and death is imminent? And how does this commitment show respect for our human dignity?

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## CLOSING PRAYER

*See page 7.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ *The reading for our next session will be Sections II, III & IV.*
- ◆ *Our next meeting will be ... [date, time, and location].*



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# SESSION TWO

## ***Samaritanus bonus: Section II, III & IV***

### READING

*II. The Living Experience of the Suffering Christ and the Proclamation of Hope*

*III. The Samaritan's "heart that sees": human life is a sacred and inviolable gift*

*IV. The Cultural Obstacles that Obscure the Sacred Value of Every Human Life*

### OPENING PRAYER

*See page 7.*

### REVIEW

*Invite one person to provide a brief summary of the readings for this session. This can be the group facilitator or any member of the group..*

### SCRIPTURE READING

*Ask one member of the group to read the following Scripture passage aloud. When he or she is finished, take a few moments to silently reflect on the Scripture passage.*

#### ***Isaiah 53***

- [1] Who would believe what we have heard?  
To whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
- [2] He grew up like a sapling before him,  
like a shoot from the parched earth;  
He had no majestic bearing to catch our eye,  
no beauty to draw us to him.
- [3] He was spurned and avoided by men,  
a man of suffering, knowing pain,  
Like one from whom you turn your face,  
spurned, and we held him in no esteem.
- [4] Yet it was our pain that he bore,  
our sufferings he endured.  
We thought of him as stricken,  
struck down by God and afflicted,
- [5] But he was pierced for our sins,  
crushed for our iniquity.  
He bore the punishment that makes us whole,  
by his wounds we were healed.

- [6] We had all gone astray like sheep,  
all following our own way;  
But the LORD laid upon him  
the guilt of us all.
- [7] Though harshly treated, he submitted  
and did not open his mouth;  
Like a lamb led to slaughter  
or a sheep silent before shearers,  
he did not open his mouth.
- [8] Seized and condemned, he was taken away.  
Who would have thought any more of his destiny?  
For he was cut off from the land of the living,  
struck for the sins of his people.
- [9] He was given a grave among the wicked,  
a burial place with evildoers,  
Though he had done no wrong,  
nor was deceit found in his mouth.
- [10] But it was the LORD's will to crush him with pain.  
By making his life as a reparation offering,  
he shall see his offspring, shall lengthen his days,  
and the LORD's will shall be accomplished through him.
- [11] Because of his anguish he shall see the light;  
because of his knowledge he shall be content;  
My servant, the just one, shall justify the many,  
their iniquity he shall bear.
- [12] Therefore I will give him his portion among the many,  
and he shall divide the spoils with the mighty,  
Because he surrendered himself to death,  
was counted among the transgressors,  
Bore the sins of many,  
and interceded for the transgressors.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Samaritanus bonus* describes how Mary and the disciples *remained* with Jesus during His hours on the Cross and their presence provided comfort. What do you think it means to truly “remain” with someone approaching life’s end? How is it different than merely being “nearby” as the soldier and spectators were at the Cross?

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2. How can the Cross be a symbol of hope and comfort to those who are seriously ill? What does the Cross teach those who care for the sick and dying?

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3. According to Section III, what is the basis of our innate dignity as human persons? Why is this principle fundamental to our understanding of morality and justice?

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4. The document describes the Good Samaritan's "heart that sees," which calls each of us to deeper conversion. In what areas of your heart do you think compassion may be lacking? Where do you think God may be asking you to "see where love is needed and act accordingly"?

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5. What are the three cultural obstacles that obscure the sacredness of human life, as highlighted in Section IV? Can you think of a specific example of each of these cultural obstacles which diminish our understanding of the intrinsic value of human life?

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## CLOSING PRAYER

*See page 7.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ *The reading for our next session will be Section V, #1-3.*
- ◆ *Our next meeting will be ... [date, time, and location].*

# SESSION THREE

## ***Samaritanus bonus*: Section V, #1-3**

### READING

*V: The Teaching of the Magisterium*

- 1. The prohibition of euthanasia and assisted suicide*
- 2. The moral obligation to exclude aggressive medical treatment*
- 3. Basic Care: the requirement of nutrition and hydration*

### OPENING PRAYER

*See page 7.*

### REVIEW

*Invite one person to provide a brief summary of the readings for this session. This can be the group facilitator or any member of the group.*

### SCRIPTURE READING

*Ask one member of the group to read the following Scripture passage aloud. When he or she is finished, take a few moments to silently reflect on the Scripture passage.*

#### ***Romans 12:9-18, 21***

[9] Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good; [10] love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor. [11] Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. [12] Rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer. [13] Contribute to the needs of the holy ones, exercise hospitality. [14] Bless those who persecute [you], bless and do not curse them. [15] Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. [16] Have the same regard for one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly; do not be wise in your own estimation. [17] Do not repay anyone evil for evil; be concerned for what is noble in the sight of all. [18] If possible, on your part, live at peace with all... [21] Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Has someone you know struggled to make decisions about end-of-life care, either for themselves or a loved one? If you are comfortable sharing, what made these decisions particularly difficult to navigate? What would have been helpful during this challenging time?
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2. In light of your reading of Section V, #1, why do you think accompaniment during the final stages of life is so essential? How can our expressions of love and solidarity give meaning to pain and suffering?

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3. How can the hastening or delay of death through “aggressive medical treatments” deprive death of its dignity?

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4. How is the decision to forego extraordinary and/or disproportionate means of care different from assisted suicide and euthanasia?

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5. Why are nutrition and hydration the most fundamental elements of basic care? Are there situations in which they can be morally suspended?

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## CLOSING PRAYER

*See page 7.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ *The reading for our next session will be Section V, #4-8.*
- ◆ *Our next meeting will be ... [date, time, and location].*



# SESSION FOUR

## *Samaritanus bonus*: Section V, #4-8

### READING

*V: The Teaching of the Magisterium*

4. *Palliative care*
5. *The role of the family and hospice*
6. *Accompaniment and care in prenatal and pediatric medicine*
7. *Analgesic therapy and loss of consciousness*
8. *The vegetative state and the state of minimal consciousness*

### OPENING PRAYER

*See page 7.*

### REVIEW

*Invite one person to provide a brief summary of the readings for this session. This can be the group facilitator or any member of the group.*

### SCRIPTURE READING

*Ask one member of the group to read the following Scripture passage aloud. When he or she is finished, take a few moments to silently reflect on the Scripture passage.*

#### ***Romans 8:18-27***

[18] I consider that the sufferings of this present time are as nothing compared with the glory to be revealed for us. [19] For creation awaits with eager expectation the revelation of the children of God; [20] for creation was made subject to futility, not of its own accord but because of the one who subjected it, in hope [21] that creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God. [22] We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; [23] and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. [24] For in hope we were saved. Now hope that sees for itself is not hope. For who hopes for what one sees? [25] But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait with endurance. [26] In the same way, the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings. [27] And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because it intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Based on the reading, how would you describe palliative care? Why do you think that the use of palliative care considerably reduces requests for euthanasia?  

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2. In some countries, the definition of palliative care has taken on misleading connotations. What practices have been incorrectly attributed to palliative care, and how are they contributing to moral confusion?  

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3. What does it mean for prenatal and pediatric accompaniment of children in the terminal stages of life to aim to “*give life to the years of a child and not years to the child’s life*”? What fundamental principle guides the care of these “little patients,” and does it differ from the care due to those at more advanced stages of life?  

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4. In order to mitigate a patient’s pain, the Church allows for analgesic therapy and sedation; however, what parameters does the Church provide to guide the use of such therapies?  

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5. What does the document say in regard to persons in a vegetative state or state of minimal consciousness? In what ways can their dignity as human persons be upheld?  

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## CLOSING PRAYER

*See page 7.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ *The reading for our next session will be Section V, #9-12.*
- ◆ *Our next meeting will be ... [date, time, and location].*

# SESSION FIVE

## ***Samaritanus bonus: Section V, #9-12***

### READING

*V: The Teaching of the Magisterium*

9. *Conscientious objections on the part of healthcare workers and of Catholic healthcare institutions*
10. *Pastoral accompaniment and the support of the sacraments*
11. *Pastoral discernment towards those who request Euthanasia or Assisted Suicide*
12. *The reform of the education and formation of healthcare workers*

### OPENING PRAYER

*See page 7.*

### REVIEW

*Invite one person to provide a brief summary of the readings for this session. This can be the group facilitator or any member of the group.*

### SCRIPTURE READING

*Ask one member of the group to read the following Scripture passage aloud. When he or she is finished, take a few moments to silently reflect on the Scripture passage.*

#### ***1 Corinthians 12:12-26***

[12] As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. [13] For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. [14] Now the body is not a single part, but many. [15] If a foot should say, "Because I am not a hand I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. [16] Or if an ear should say, "Because I am not an eye I do not belong to the body," it does not for this reason belong any less to the body. [17] If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? [18] But as it is, God placed the parts, each one of them, in the body as he intended. [19] If they were all one part, where would the body be? [20] But as it is, there are many parts, yet one body. [21] The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you," nor again the head to the feet, "I do not need you." [22] Indeed, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are all the more necessary, [23] and those parts of the body that we consider less honorable we surround with greater honor, and our less presentable parts are treated with greater propriety, [24] whereas our more presentable parts do not need this. But God has so constructed the body as to give greater honor to a part that is without it, [25] so that there may be no division in the body, but that the parts may have the same concern for one another. [26] If [one] part suffers, all the parts suffer with it; if one part is honored, all the parts share its joy.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In the conclusion of the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus commands us to “Go and do likewise” (Lk 10:37). How is Christ calling us to care for those nearing the end of life? What qualities should characterize our relationship with our suffering neighbors, and what qualities are to be rejected?

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2. *Samaritanus bonus* asserts that “death is a decisive moment in the human person’s encounter with God the Savior.” Therefore, to what end should our accompaniment of our suffering neighbor always be oriented? What must our accompaniment have as its goal?

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3. What are some concrete ways we may be able to help someone nearing the end of life encounter the Lord and prepare for their entrance into eternal life?

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4. What is the Church’s response to those who request euthanasia or assisted suicide? What is the purpose of delaying Penance with absolution and Anointing with Viaticum?

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5. Why is it essential “*to show care for those who care*”?

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## CLOSING PRAYER

See page 7.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ *The reading for our next session will be the Conclusion.*
- ◆ *Our next meeting will be ... [date, time, and location].*

# SESSION SIX

## *Samaritanus bonus*: Conclusion

### READING

*Conclusion*

### OPENING PRAYER

*See page 7.*

### REVIEW

*Invite one person to provide a brief summary of the readings for this session. This can be the group facilitator or any member of the group.*

### SCRIPTURE READING

*Ask one member of the group to read the following Scripture passage aloud. When he or she is finished, take a few moments to silently reflect on the Scripture passage.*

#### ***Matthew 25:31-40***

[31] “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, [32] and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. [33] He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. [34] Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. [35] For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, [36] naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’ [37] Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? [38] When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? [39] When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’ [40] And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some ways that we as Catholics can “bear witness to love in suffering”?

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2. As Christians we are called to accompany those in the terminal stages of life, but according to the document, it is not enough to simply share their pain. What else must we do as Catholics?

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3. What is your biggest takeaway from the reading and study of *Samaritanus bonus*?

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4. Are there any concepts or teachings regarding end-of-life care that you find confusing or challenging? Is there a particular topic you feel called to learn more about?

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5. How have you been inspired by reflecting more deeply on the witness of the Good Samaritan? How has this parable stretched your heart?

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## CLOSING PRAYER

*See page 7.*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ◆ *Thank you for participating in this document study that has deepened our understanding of the Church's teachings on end-of-life care and helped us grow in respect for the gift of human life!*

# APPENDIX

## Additional Discussion Questions

### SESSION ONE

Introduction & Section I

1. Why do you think that advancements in medical technologies and healthcare require moral discernment? What “complex situations” contributed to the need for the Church to reaffirm its teachings and provide concrete guidelines?
2. Why do you think it is dangerous for relationships between doctors and patients to be purely technical and impersonal? What is the danger of losing the personal and human nature of such a relationship?
3. Why do you think it is particularly important to emphasize that the human person is a *unity of body and soul* in the context of end-of-life care?
4. Why do you think it is important for medicine to accept death as part of the human condition?
5. “*To cure if possible, always to care.*” What types of care should be provided for a person who is in the critical or terminal phases of life?

### SESSION TWO

Section II, III & IV

1. How might those who are sick and suffering relate to Christ’s own suffering, agony on the Cross, and Resurrection?
2. What examples can you find of physical, psychological, moral, or spiritual suffering in *Isaiah 53* according to how such sufferings are defined in *Samaritanus bonus*? How do they relate to Jesus’ experience? How might they relate to the experience of someone who is gravely ill?
3. *Samaritanus bonus* asserts that human life is “*no longer recognized as a value in itself.*” What are some examples we witness in our society today?
4. What cultural phenomenon has Pope Francis described as a “throw-away culture” and Pope St. John Paul II as a “culture of death”? What examples can you think of that demonstrate our society’s confusion between good and evil?
5. In our culture, individualism is often seen as virtue. In reality, how can individualism threaten our understanding of the value of every human life?



## SESSION THREE

Section V, #1-3

1. Why is euthanasia a “grave sin” and “*crime against human life*”? How has its legalization created confusion about the responsibility to provide care for those nearing life’s end?
2. What does *Samaritanus bonus* mean by saying that requests for euthanasia or assisted suicide are often a “*symptom*” of disease? What does it prescribe to treat this symptom?
3. What should be the Christian response to those attempting to hasten their own death?

## SESSION FOUR

Section V, #4-8

1. Does palliative care promise an end to all suffering?
2. Why is the role of the family central and irreplaceable in the care of terminally ill patients?
3. *Samaritanus bonus* asserts that “the Christian response to the mystery of death and suffering is to provide not an explanation but a Presence” which helps to shoulder the pain and open it to hope. How do hospice centers contribute to the fulfillment of this mission?
4. The life of every child with a terminal diagnosis is “sacred, unique, unrepeatable, and inviolable, *exactly like that of every adult person.*” What are some positive ways we see this truth put into practice? What are some examples of actions or attitudes that go against this truth?

## SESSION FIVE

Section V, #9-12

1. When confronted with legalized euthanasia or assisted suicide, what is our responsibility as Christians?
2. How are Catholic healthcare institutions called to follow the example of the Good Samaritan?
3. What is the role of education (formal or informal) in helping to protect human life in its most critical stages? Prior to studying this document, how aware were you of the Church’s teachings on end-of-life care?

## SESSION SIX

Conclusion

1. What does God promise to those who faithfully fulfill their vocation to love and care for others?
2. How has a deeper understanding of the Church’s teachings on end-of-life care impacted you? How do you think this understanding will bear fruit in your life?