

## THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PASTOR: Giving Thanks

This week, of course, contains the civic observance of “Thanksgiving Day”. It has been a long-standing custom in our nation to observe this day, and, though there is some historical debate about it, it is said to have its origins with the Pilgrims in their early years of settling Plymouth Colony in the 1620’s. They desired, it seems, to give thanks to God for blessings upon them despite their years of hardship, fleeing, as they were, persecution in England, and finding themselves in a new land with many struggles and challenges. Indeed, it is known for certain that a full one-half of the original 102 passengers of the Mayflower died during the first winter of 1620-21. Their experience took on new meaning for me several years ago when I discovered that two of them were my ancestors: James Chilton (the oldest passenger) and his wife, whose name is not recorded. Sadly, they both were among those who died that first winter. Even though the pilgrims, as puritan “separatists” during the English Reformation, were highly anti-Catholic in their views (we often forget how many Catholics – including priests - were tortured and killed in England during this time, and how Mass had to be celebrated in secret), we might still admire the pilgrims for their spirit of sacrifice, tenacity, and deep faith in God in the midst of enormous trials. Their beliefs in self-governance and personal liberties laid the foundation for their descendants, 4 generations later, to fight a Revolution and to draft our Constitution. They believed in God, and they were grateful.

That’s what we Catholics have always been about: believing in God and being thankful. In fact, the word “eucharist” comes from the Greek which means just that: “giving thanks”. Every Mass, indeed, is an experience of giving thanks to God in the Eucharistic Real Presence of Jesus Christ, the one through whom we experience *true freedom* from Satan, *true liberation* from sin, and *eternal hope* for a “new land”: not Massachusetts (as wonderful as that state might be...), but rather Heaven. And like the pilgrims, along our journey in this life toward Heaven, we constantly endure trials and hardships; sufferings and set-backs. As one example, consider the serious issues of scandal all of us in the Church have had to endure this past year as the result of the actions of a few. But in the midst of these sufferings, including our personal struggles in the life, we still claim our hope in Christ, and we still, like the pilgrims, look to the blessings we have received from God. And we continue, at each and every Holy Mass, to give thanks: to offer the Holy Eucharist, in a spirit of trust, surrender, and love to God through Jesus. May this Thanksgiving be an occasion not only of deepening our bonds with fellow citizens of our great Republic, but also of deepening our relationship with Jesus Christ in the Holy Mass. Thanks be to God!

Fr. Ferguson is available to help you with any questions or concerns you may have; please contact him at [hamilton.college@outlook.com](mailto:hamilton.college@outlook.com) or at 419-634-2626.

## THOUGHTS FOR OUR PARISH CHILDREN by “Jackie”, the Pastor’s Cat



Hi boys and girls! My name is “Jackie”, and as you know, I am Father Ferguson’s cat! Ooooh! Ooooh! I am all excited! That’s right! Father says that Thanksgiving is only a few days away! And you know, to us cats, Thanksgiving means....FOOD! I can hardly sleep (that says a lot for a cat...) because I can hardly wait to sink my fangs into some roasted turkey (we cats love to eat birds, and turkeys are BIG birds!), with sides of tuna casserole with tuna gravy (yum!), breaded mouse nuggets (to die for!), salmon patties (kids, salmon means FISH!), and catnip/grass salad (got to have your veggies!).

I’ve been bouncing off walls and jumping on furniture just waiting for Thanksgiving to come! But Father says that I’m missing the true meaning of Thanksgiving. He says that it’s not about stuffing your cheeks full of food, but it’s about giving thanks to God for all the blessings He gives to us and to our nation! Well, I suppose he’s right. I thank God for creating me, for living in a great country, and for a good home. For what do you wish to give God thanks this week on Thanksgiving? (besides mouse nuggets!)

Have a “purr”-fect week!

## Bazaar – thank you and congratulations!

A **BIG thank you** to all who worked, who donated supplies, who donated theme baskets, and all who came and bought meals and tickets and other goodies!

And **congratulations!** to all the winners of Theme Baskets and the 50/50 drawing!

There are some items left to purchase: Homemade noodles and decorated towels to benefit OLL and cookie mixes and car magnets to benefit OLLY – Our Lady of Lourdes' Youth. They hold fund raisers to help with the cost of going to the big Steubenville Youth Conference every other year; your donations to OLLY are *greatly* appreciated!

---

## Advent Penance Service

Sunday, December 2 ~ 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. at Our Lady of Lourdes

Exposition and Adoration ~ Prayer and Reflection ~ Confessions

12:30 pm	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
12:45-2:15	Quiet time for Prayer and Reflection
12:45 – 2:15	Confessions heard by Fr. Jeffrey
12:45 – 1:15	Grade 2 PSR Students' First Reconciliation, with Father Ferguson <i>(No one else will go to Fr. Ferguson for Confession until all Grade 2 students have finished...)</i>
1:15 – 2:15	Confessions heard by Fr. Ferguson
2:15 pm	Benediction and Reposition of the Blessed Sacrament
2:30 pm	Dismissal



---

## Dine to Donate

Sunday, December 9 from 12:00 until 2:00 p.m.  
to benefit the Tenth Annual ONU Kairos Retreat

## at Viva Maria's

### Italian Buffet includes

Scrambled Eggs	Potatoes
Tortellini Alfredo	Baked Ziti
Lasagna	Meatballs & Italian Sausage
Italian Veggies	Salad
Breadsticks	Pizza
Cannoli Cream Puffs	Brownies

# Killing the Pain, Not the Patient: Palliative Care vs. Assisted Suicide

*Assisted suicide is radically different from end-of-life care and the practice of palliative care.*

@uscbbprolife  
@ProjectRachel  
fb.com/people of life

UNITED STATES CONFERENCE  
OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

Secretariat of Pro-Life  
Activities

[www.usccb.org/repectlife](http://www.usccb.org/repectlife)

*Assisted suicide is in the news and on lawmakers' agendas. Supporters call it "aid in dying" and claim it is just another option for ending intolerable pain as part of end-of-life care. But assisted suicide is radically different from end-of-life care and the practice of palliative care, the healing art of relieving pain and other distressing symptoms for patients who are seriously ill. In fact, these two agendas are at war with each other.*



## \* Different Drugs, Different Results

When properly prescribed for the pain of serious illness, powerful pain medications like morphine and other opioids are safe and effective. Patients can have their pain well-controlled without risk to life, and generally stay alert as well.

Assisted suicide is very different. Where it has been legalized, doctors can prescribe a lethal overdose of pills to patients whom they think will die within six months, so they can kill themselves. The patient then intentionally swallows a massive overdose of barbiturates to cause unconsciousness and death.

## \* The Importance of Intent

Besides having opposite results, these two approaches express different intentions.

While pain medication is generally safe under medical supervision, it may have side-effects. For example, barbiturates may be used in rare instances to sedate an agitated patient in the final stage of dying if other pain control methods are inadequate, though this poses some risk of shortening life.

In such cases, the doctor and patient must assess the good they intend and proceed only if this good outweighs the unintended adverse effects. As risk cannot always be eliminated, modern medicine would be impossible without this "principle of double effect." The key is that no one involved intends the bad effects, especially the bad effect of killing the patient.

Assisted suicide, by contrast, directly intends the patient's death, which is never morally permissible. The doctor prescribes an intentionally lethal overdose, with instructions on how to use the pills to cause death. (Interestingly, there is no record that any patient accidentally surviving the overdose has ever tried it again.<sup>1</sup>)

Medical organizations like the American Medical Association and the American College of Physicians oppose doctor-assisted suicide, in part because it destroys this essential distinction between intended and unintended effects of treatment. Patients need to be able to trust their doctors to always care for their lives and never deliberately cause death.

## \* Eliminate the Problem, Not the Patient

Palliative care also addresses symptoms beyond physical pain, in ways that go beyond medication. Patients facing serious illness may feel hopeless and depressed, as though their lives have lost meaning. Addressing psychological, emotional, and spiritual problems is essential to palliative care. Assisted suicide alleviates none of these problems, but gives in to them. Consider that about half of patients who had requested assisted suicide under the Oregon law in its first three years changed their minds when the doctor provided palliative care.<sup>2</sup>

Yet in Oregon, almost none of the patients receiving lethal drugs are evaluated to assess whether their wish for death arises from treatable depression—and over half say they requested the drugs partly because they feel they are becoming a “burden” on others.<sup>3</sup> Offering assisted suicide can only confirm and strengthen that feeling. It ignores the underlying problems, instead abandoning and eliminating the patient who has the problems.

## \* Assisted Suicide Undermines Palliative Care

Assisted suicide is detrimental not only for individual patients, but also for patient care on a large scale. In countries like the Netherlands, where assisted suicide has been accepted for many years, progress in palliative care has stagnated.<sup>4</sup> In Oregon, legalization was followed by an increase in severe untreated pain among terminally ill patients. During a period when 1,832 hospices opened in other states, only five opened in Oregon. In other states legalizing assisted suicide, use of hospice care has fallen below the national average.<sup>5</sup> By contrast, when states pass new laws forbidding assisted suicide, while affirming that doctors may use drugs like morphine for effective pain control, use of these medications has increased—indicating progress in pain management practices.<sup>6</sup>

The reason is obvious. Optimum palliative care requires years of training and experience, as well as a commitment to the patient as someone with inherent dignity who deserves excellent care. Assisted suicide avoids the need for this hard work and erodes this commitment. It provides a “quick and easy,” as well as cheap, answer to terminal illness. Once death is accepted as a solution, why bother to devote resources to more expensive medical progress?

Assisted suicide does not enhance medicine. As noted by a doctor specializing in palliative and hospice care in the Netherlands, killing “becomes a substitute for learning how to relieve the suffering of dying patients.”<sup>7</sup>

## \* True Love and Mercy

Do we see people as the problem, such that our responsibility begins and ends with helping patients kill themselves? Or, do we see seriously ill patients as fellow human beings who deserve our love and solutions for their problems? Will we succumb to the “false mercy” of assisted suicide, or will we endorse what Pope St. John Paul II called “the way of love and true mercy”?<sup>8</sup> Will we dedicate ourselves to providing genuinely compassionate care, as a society and for our own loved ones? Our answer today determines the care available now and for years to come.

---

<sup>1</sup> Doerflinger, Richard M., M.A. "Oregon's Assisted Suicides: The Up-to-Date Reality in 2017." *On Point*, no. 21 (March 2018): 5. <https://lozierinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Oregon-Assisted-Suicide-The-Up-To-Date-Reality-2017.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Ganzini, Linda, M.D., Heidi D. Nelson, M.D., M.P.H., Terri A. Schmidt, M.D., Dale F. Kraemer, Ph.D., Molly A. Delorit, B.A., and Melinda A. Lee, M.D. "Physicians' Experiences with the Oregon Death with Dignity Act." *The New England Journal of Medicine*, no. 342 (February 24, 2000): 557-63. doi:10.1056/NEJM200002243420806.

<sup>3</sup> *Assisted Suicide Laws in Oregon and Washington: What Safeguards?* PDF. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, February 22, 2018: 2,5. <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/assisted-suicide/to-live-each-day/upload/suicideoregonfeb2018.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> *Physician-Assisted Suicide: Threat to Improved Palliative Care.* PDF. Washington, D.C.: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, March 4, 2017: 2-3. [http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/assisted-suicide/to-live-each-day/upload/suicide\\_palliative\\_care-2.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/assisted-suicide/to-live-each-day/upload/suicide_palliative_care-2.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Doerflinger, Richard M., M.A. "The Effect of Legalizing Assisted Suicide on Palliative Care and Suicide Rates: A Response to Compassion and Choices." *On Point*, no. 13 (March 2017): 3. <https://lozierinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/The-Effect-of-Legalization-of-Assisted-Suicide.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Brief *Amici Curiae* for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, California Catholic Conference, Oregon Catholic Conference, Washington State Catholic Conference; Catholic Health Association of the United States, and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod as *Amici Curiae* in Support of Petitioners, *Alberto R. Gonzales, U.S. Attorney General, et al. v. Oregon, et al.*, No 04-623, \*18-22 (filed May 9, 2005). <http://www.usccb.org/about/general-counsel/amicus-briefs/upload/amicus-sct-gonzales-v-oregon-2005-05.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Zyllicz, Zbigniew, M.D. "Palliative Care and Euthanasia in the Netherlands." In *The Case Against Assisted Suicide*, 142. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

<sup>8</sup> John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae (Gospel of Life)* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1995), no. 66-67.

This article was updated and shortened from a 1998 Respect Life Program article by the same name. Excerpts from *Evangelium vitae*, © 1995 Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City. Used with permission. All rights reserved. Reprinted [Excerpted] from *Respect Life Program*, copyright © 2018, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C. All rights reserved.