

## Euthanasia Right to Life Essay

Murder. What does it mean? The dictionary definition is, "The unlawful and malicious or premeditated killing of a person." The dictionary says unlawful, but if a killing is legal, does that make it right? Euthanasia is the "painless" killing of a person, and is intended to end suffering. It is also known as doctor-assisted suicide or mercy killing. The Catholic Church has a long-standing belief that euthanasia is wrong. The Church believes that, "Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and remains in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end."<sup>1</sup> This means that nobody can decide to end their life or anyone else's life, even if they are suffering. God alone should decide when each person dies, not that person or society.

To help us gain a deeper understanding of this issue, recent popes have written and spoken about euthanasia. Pope Francis recently called euthanasia "playing with life" and "a sin against the Creator."<sup>2</sup> He said this to summarize the Catechism passage and make it more understandable and accessible. Pope John Paul II wrote, "Human suffering invokes compassion. It also invokes respect."<sup>3</sup> He hoped to show us that good can come if you persevere through suffering.

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<sup>1</sup> Catholic Church. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2258. New York: Doubleday, 1995. Print.

<sup>2</sup> Press, Associated. "Pope Denounces Euthanasia As 'Sin Against God'." *Time.Com* (2014): N.PAG. *Middle Search Plus*. Web. 15 Dec. 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Press, Associated. "Pope Denounces Euthanasia As 'Sin Against God'." *Time.Com* (2014): N.PAG. *Middle Search Plus*. Web. 15 Dec. 2015.

Unfortunately, not everyone shares in the Church's view of euthanasia. In the United States, almost 50 percent of people approve euthanasia.<sup>4</sup> Also, there are already "right to die" states here, such as Oregon. For an example of a euthanasia system that has been in place for years, we look to the Netherlands, where euthanasia is commonly practiced. One in every 28 deaths there are by euthanasia.<sup>5</sup> If a patient decides that their suffering is "unbearable" and convinces two doctors, they can be euthanized. The definition of unbearable is debatable, and could be extended to mental health conditions, including treatable instances. Even from a neutral point of view, this is illogical because the patient may have an illness causing them to have low self-esteem. These illnesses are treatable and possible to overcome. However, patients are not required to meet with a mental health professional before they are euthanized.

Another alarming possibility is corruption. If someone is killed in a euthanasia clinic, how do we know under what circumstances they were actually killed? Governments or people could bribe doctors to kill someone and cover it up. In addition, euthanasia is irreversible. Once someone has died, it cannot be changed. Many doctors will wish they could take back their decision to euthanize someone at least one time.

There are many solutions and alternatives to euthanasia. Someone with a terminal illness or an irreversible disability can live in a long-term institution and live a comfortable life. Or, if they have a less serious disability, there are many organizations that can help them live a more ordinary life. Someone near to death should be made as comfortable as possible. A patient's family should visit them and help them feel comfortable as their life draws to an end.

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<sup>4</sup> Verbakel, Ellen, and Eva Jaspers. "A Comparative Study On Permissiveness Toward Euthanasia." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 74.1 (2010): 109. *TOPICsearch*. Web. 16 Dec. 2015.

<sup>5</sup> ROSS, WINSTON. "DYING DUTCH. (Cover Story)." *Newsweek Global* 164. 7 (2015): 24. *Middle Search Plus*. Web. 15 Dec. 2015.