

## Countries that allow Euthanasia

Euthanasia is legal in Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg (EU countries)

Some types of **assisted suicide** and **passive euthanasia** are legal in **Switzerland, Germany, Mexico** and **five American states**.

**Switzerland – Dignitas** - An association based in Switzerland which has the motto: 'Dignitas – to live with dignity – to die with dignity.'

**Illegal in the UK - Campaign for Dignity in Dying:** A national campaign and membership which believe everybody has the right to a good death, including the option of assisted dying for terminally ill, mentally competent adults.

**Political pressure:** Assisted Dying Bill debated in Parliament in **September 2015 but was voted down**.

## Palliative care/ Hospices

**Definition:** Palliative care is the care of patients with active, progressive, far-advanced disease, for whom the focus of care is the relief and prevention of suffering and the quality of life.

'palliative care is a special form of charity. As such it should be encouraged' CCC2279.

'The **dying** should be given attention and care to help them live their last moments in dignity and peace. They will be helped by the prayer of their relatives, who must see to it that the sick receive at the proper time the sacraments that prepare them to meet the living God.' CCC 2299

The Church explains that doing something to cause death, or not doing something on purpose to stop death, in order to eliminate suffering, **IS a murder**. This is seriously opposite to the dignity of the person and to the respect we should be showing to God and his creation.

Q. What is the Catholic Church's stance on Euthanasia?

Euthanasia is from two ancient Greek words:

Eu

Good

Thanatos

Death



**Voluntary Euthanasia:**  
Euthanasia carried out at the specific request and consent of the dying person

**Involuntary Euthanasia:**  
Euthanasia carried out in order to stop additional suffering but without the consent of the person

Euthanasia is the termination of human life by painless means for the purpose of ending severe suffering.  
**Also referred to as Mercy Killing**

# Euthanasia

**Active Euthanasia:**  
A deliberate action to end life

**Non-voluntary euthanasia:**  
Euthanasia carried out on someone who is incapable of asking to live/die e.g. severely brain-damaged/in a coma.

**Passive Euthanasia:**  
Allowing death by withdrawing treatment e.g. switching off a life support machine.

All life is sacred from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death. 'Whatever its motives and means, direct **euthanasia** consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick or dying person. **It is morally unacceptable.**' CCC2277

However, the Church does accept that the use of **certain medications** which are **necessary** as part of the ordinary care of a person, but which may have the **risk of death**, can be morally in conformity with human dignity, **if death is not willed** as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable. CCC2279

This is sometimes called: the principle of **double effect**.



Q. What would this mean in the example of a patient who is in severe pain? They **NEED** to be given so much pain relief that its side effect could be stopping their breathing and so they would die. What is the right thing to do?

## Quality of life Vs Sanctity of Life

**Quality of Life** – Life must have/be worth living. If suffering is great then there is now quality on continuing to live, and people should be able to choose this end.

**Sanctity of Life** – Life is holy and belongs to God. Life should be protected from the moment of Conception until natural death.

Can you come to a conclusion on whether euthanasia is right or wrong?

All life is sacred from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death.

Dying, Death and bereavement affect everyone, and how the journey towards death and death itself is travelled will impact upon how those who are bereaved manage their bereavement.

The "slippery slope" idea: if made legal there could be no return.

Hippocratic Oath (the promise doctors make to protect and save life): euthanasia would result in a move away from this oath – which could then lead to decisions regarding the quality of life of the patient.

It could become financially driven – it is cheaper to use Euthanasia on the elderly/sick and dying/disabled than to look after them in hospital.

Refusing euthanasia is morally good – allowing it is at best morally questionable and at worst morally bad.

# Do you have a right to Die?



'Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign.' (John Stuart Mill)



Euthanasia puts sufferers out of their misery when pain cannot be controlled.

A patient could be reassured that they will be given euthanasia past the stage where they could kill themselves – this would give them a longer, more peaceful life.

The "Liverpool care pathway" was developed to help doctors and nurses provide quality end-of-life care.

Results from Holland (where Euthanasia is legal) suggest only about 1000 people a year are given euthanasia by a doctor they know and trust. The usual practice is to die at home among family and friends.

Pain-killing - when pain is severe drugs need to be used to make the patient comfortable. The patient is usually semi-conscious, therefore leading to a poor quality of life.