

## **Euthanasia By HG Bishop Serapion**

Category : Social Issues

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### Euthanasia

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“Euthanasia” is a Greek word that means “happy or easy” death.

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It is used to signify medical intervention used to end the life of a patient suffering from incurable diseases, especially th

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The intervention is seen as stemming from the doctor’s mercy and pity for his patient.

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This concept also calls for ending the lives of children or infants, who suffer from mental retardation or complicated

Â **The Supporters of Euthanasia are divided into Two Groups:** The first group requires a clear and frank approval by the patient before medical intervention is taken to end his life.Â Â This is called *Voluntary Euthanasia*. The second group regards the medical decision to intervene in ending the life of the patient as sufficient, since it is in the best interest of the patient, i.e. a patient is rescued from pain and suffering.Â In this case the approval of the patient is not necessary.Â Â This is called *Involuntary Euthanasia*. This second group takes into consideration the cases in which the patient is incapable of giving his consent and presupposes that if his condition permitted, he would agree. Â

**Supporters of Euthanasia base their Case on Three Elements:** Â **The Patient’s Desire:** Some consider that the patient’s desire to end his life justifies medical intervention to carry out this wish, on the basis that only the patient has the right to choose death.Â These people limit their acceptance of medical intervention only when there is consent by the patient.Â Hence, they only support Voluntary Euthanasia. Â **The Dignity of Human Life:** Some support euthanasia on the basis of preserving the dignity of human life.Â Therefore, they accept intervention to end the life of an individual who has reached a stage that robs him of his dignity. These people take into account some complicated diseases and the accompanying symptoms, e.g. pain, loss of concentration, delirium, and lack of bodily functions. They see all these conditions as not agreeing with the honor of human life.Â They regard intervention to end the patient’s life in such cases as not only an act of mercy, but also an act, which preserves the dignity of the patient. Obviously, these people do not mean that any case having these conditions would qualify for intervention, but they mean the complicated diseases such as terminal cancer, in which the patient has reached an incurable stage and wishes to end his life. Â

**The Patient’s Interest:** Some believe that as long as the intervention to end the life of the patient is for the best interest and welfare of the patient, then it is an acceptable act, even if the patient’s condition makes it difficult to give his consent. Euthanasia is a practice that has the outward appearance of mercy and pity.Â However, inwardly, there is denial of the basic truths about our faith regarding life and death.Â Â Therefore, from a religious point of view, it is rejected.Â Every Christian with a conscience must oppose any attempts to pass laws that allow it. Â **Euthanasia is rejected for the Following Reasons:** Â **The Human Life is a Gift from God:** “*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostril the breath of life; and man became a living being.*”Â (Gen. 2:7)Â Man does not have the power to end his life because it is his desire to do so.Â Likewise, a person’s expression of his desire to end his life, regardless of the reasons, does

not justify others to carry out this desire, especially those working in the medical field. Accepting a patient's desire to end his life as the basis for such an argument would lead us to also accept suicide, which undoubtedly is an expression of a person's desire to end his life. Thus, are we going to accept suicide as a means to end a person's life because it is his desire? **The Honor of Human Life is in Life Itself:** Regardless of what the outward appearance of life is like, nothing can destroy a person's dignity except sin. Illness, pain, and physical weakness do not destroy human dignity, only sin destroys the human nature and degrades it. Indeed, sickness is not a part of the human nature, which God has created to be completely healthy. Therefore, man always tries to avoid disease or seek treatment when needed. The presence of illness, no matter how severe it is or what form it takes, does not justify the medical intervention to end it, because there is no cure. **God Wishes Goodness from Man, but Sometimes Allows Sickness for the Good of Man:** Sickness has led many people to repentance, and the crucible of pain during suffering has purified their souls and spirits. Also, the sick person can be a spoken message for the healthy, who take for granted the grace of good health, or those who indulge in worldly matters and over-value them. With our human vision, it is difficult to decide what is in the best interest of a sick person. Although, every effort is made to ease the pain of the sick, and every prayer is raised for the sake of his healing, yet, in the end, with faith and total submission to our good Lord, we leave the matter of life and death to God. He alone knows what is in the best interest of the sick person. Finally, we would like to differentiate between euthanasia and the intervention to withhold medical life support equipment from a patient who suffers from brain death. In the case of euthanasia, the patient is still alive, his brain is functioning, as well as many of his organs, but there is no hope for a cure. Intervention in this case means ending life. This would be considered a murder crime, which is not justified by the patient's consent, despair in not finding a cure, or supposedly having pity on the patient. As for cases of brain death, the patient is in fact "dead" as indicated by the absence of brain function. What seems to be a pulse and breathing is in fact just artificial, because it is resulting from the life support equipment attached to the patient. Intervention to remove these machines displays honor towards the deceased and mercy towards his relatives and loved one.