**HORIZONS OF HOPE- WITH BONUS FEATURES FROM CHURCH TEACHING**

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**Week 2: Discerning and making decisions at the end of life**

**Resources:**

From the **Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith**

***SAMARITANUS BONUS* -on the care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life**

<https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20200714_samaritanus-bonus_en.html#Pastoral_discernment>

11. Pastoral discernment towards those who request Euthanasia or Assisted Suicide

The pastoral accompaniment of those who expressly ask for euthanasia or assisted suicide today presents a singular moment when a reaffirmation of the teaching of the Church is necessary. With respect to the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, the confessor must be assured of the presence of the true contrition necessary for the validity of absolution which consists in “sorrow of mind and a detestation for sin committed, with the purpose of not sinning for the future”. In this situation, we find ourselves before a person who, whatever their subjective dispositions may be, has decided upon a gravely immoral act and willingly persists in this decision. Such a state involves a manifest absence of the proper disposition for the reception of the Sacraments of Penance, with absolution, and Anointing, with Viaticum. Such a penitent can receive these sacraments only when the minister discerns his or her readiness to take concrete steps that indicate he or she has modified their decision in this regard. Thus a person who may be registered in an association to receive euthanasia or assisted suicide must manifest the intention of cancelling such a registration before receiving the sacraments. It must be recalled that the necessity to postpone absolution does not imply a judgment on the imputability of guilt, since personal responsibility could be diminished or non-existent. The priest could administer the sacraments to an unconscious person sub condicione if, on the basis of some signal given by the patient beforehand, he can presume his or her repentance.

The position of the Church here does not imply a non-acceptance of the sick person. It must be accompanied by a willingness to listen and to help, together with a deeper explanation of the nature of the sacrament, in order to provide the opportunity to desire and choose the sacrament up to the last moment. The Church is careful to look deeply for adequate signs of conversion, so that the faithful can reasonably ask for the reception of the sacraments. To delay absolution is a medicinal act of the Church, intended not to condemn, but to lead the sinner to conversion.

It is necessary to remain close to a person who may not be in the objective condition to receive the sacraments, for this nearness is an invitation to conversion, especially when euthanasia, requested or accepted, will not take place immediately or imminently. Here it remains possible to accompany the person whose hope may be revived and whose erroneous decision may be modified, thus opening the way to admission to the sacraments.

Nevertheless, those who spiritually assist these persons should avoid any gesture, such as remaining until the euthanasia is performed, that could be interpreted as approval of this action. Such a presence could imply complicity in this act. This principle applies in a particular way, but is not limited to, chaplains in the healthcare systems where euthanasia is practiced, for they must not give scandal by behaving in a manner that makes them complicit in the termination of human life.

RESOURCE LIST:

**LETTER FROM THE CONGREGATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH:**

**SAMARITANUS BONUS**

<https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20200714_samaritanus-bonus_en.html#Pastoral_discernment>

**CARDUS CENTRE**

<https://www.cardus.ca/>

**EUTHANASIA AND ASSISTED SUICIDE: WHY NOT?**

<https://www.archtoronto.org/siteassets/media/offices--ministries/sub-sites/euthanasia/colf-euthanasia-assisted-suicide-why-not.pdf>

**GUIDELINES FOR CELEBRATION OF SACRAMENTS WITH PERSONS CONSIDERING DEATH BY ASSISTED SUICIDE OR EUTHANASIA**

<https://www.archtoronto.org/siteassets/media/archdiocese-of-toronto-main-site/files/resources/guidelines_for_celebration_of_sacraments_with_persons_considering_death_by_assisted_suicide_or_euthanasia.pdf>

**In a culture of death, let us stand against the world and choose God by choosing life.**