

## Wednesday Morning – Justice and the End of Life Issues

### End of Life Health Care – A Catholic Perspective

*Our mortality, the questions about dying, the spiritual tradition of the Church, and the art of dying well.*

Ethical issues between Catholic Moral Theology and hospital medical questions about treatments

- Ordinary v. Extraordinary means of care
- Vatican Declaration of Euthanasia (1980)

Benefit v. burden

- Patient autonomy
  - Advance directives
  - Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare

Palliative Care

- Pope Francis' June 2020 statement "The Good Samaritan (Samaritanus Bonus): On the care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life"

It is okay to say "enough is enough"

- Aid in dying – misguided response

Absolutization of Autonomy

- Autonomy – guarantor of our intrinsic dignity
- Part of a bigger understanding
- We are free but interdependent actors in humanity
- Death is inevitable
- Cannot escape our finitude nor imperfections of life
- O. Carter Snead
  - "expressive individualism"
- Alasdair MacIntyre
  - Expressive individualism is "forgetful of the body"

Alternative to Aid in Dying

- Accompaniment of the dying
  - Palliative care

- Hospice care
- Advance directives
- Strategic investments in improving nursing, skilled, long-term facilities
- Solidarity and love

#### Quality of Life

- Careful discernment of the meaning of “quality”
- Keep “equality” of life in mind when considering “quality” of life

#### From a Christian Perspective...

- Laws permitting aid in dying lack principles restricting access to these measures only to the terminally ill
- Rife with risks of fraud, abuse, duress, neglect, and coercion
- Laws must allow for the aggressive palliation of pain
- Laws must protect vulnerable populations

#### Aid in Dying is an Act of Abandonment – Not an Act of Care for the Dying

- Parable of the Good Samaritan
- A solution in search of a problem