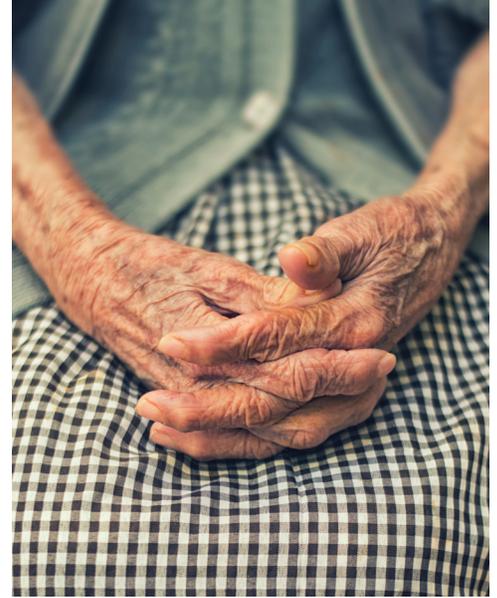


HOSPITALITY FOR

The Dying and the Bereaved

Too many Catholics in our communities are left to suffer and die alone. The unfortunate passing of California's harmful Physician-Assisted Suicide Law in 2015 challenges Catholic parishes to ensure that the chronically and terminally ill in our communities do not feel compelled to choose assisted suicide. To this end, the Church must educate Catholics about the ethics around end of life care and strengthen parish ministries to the sick and dying. How do we ensure that parishioners and patients are accompanied, loved and supported in their serious illness and end-of-life journey?



REFLECT

I was sick and you visited me... [Matthew 25:36](#)

When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

[Matthew 14:14](#)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. [2 Corinthians 1:3-4](#)

The holiness of the Lord Jesus drew the sick and the hungry to seek healing and nourishment. When we unite ourselves more closely to Christ, his spirit then makes us his messengers, his missionaries with the light of his divine mercy in our hearts. It is not a matter of wondering when will others return but when will we eagerly seek to bring them to Christ? [Call to Holiness, Bishop Jaime Soto](#)

The awareness that the dying person will soon meet God for all eternity should impel his or her relatives, loved ones, the medical, health-care and religious personnel, to help him or her in this decisive phase of life, with concern that pays attention to every aspect of existence, including the spiritual.- "Faith responds to fears about death." [Pope John Paul II, Address to an international congress on the care of the dying, March 17, 1992](#)

If the person feels loved, the shadow of euthanasia disappears. [Pope Francis Seminar in Health Management 2013](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Death and dying is a part of living. What are the ways that we minister the sick and dying in our own parish community? How do we care for the sick and the homebound? Do we have healthcare ministry?
2. How do we minister the bereaved (i.e. funeral ministry, grief groups)?
3. How well do Catholics in our parish understand the Church's teaching on end of life ethics, accessing quality palliative care, hospice care and advance healthcare directives, and pastoral care at the end of life?