

# RESOURCES TO OPPOSE LEGALIZED PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE

## PARISH TOOL KIT | MARYLAND 2024

Members of the Maryland General Assembly have introduced legislation that would legalize death via physician assisted suicide in Maryland. A doctor could prescribe a lethal drug cocktail that can take hours, even days, before someone dies.

We need your help now! **Please use these resources to pray, teach and act on behalf of compassionate protection for life.** Alerts and updates will be shared with members of the Catholic Advocacy Network so please encourage parishioners to join - and call us if you have any questions about how your parish can get involved.

### **RESOURCES** (English and Spanish; also can download from [mdcatholic.org/pas](https://mdcatholic.org/pas))

1. Letter from Maryland's Catholic Bishops (PDF) \*added Jan. 30, 2024
2. Flocknote/bulletin announcements
3. General intercessions
4. Prayer card
5. Novena
6. Graphics
7. Fact sheet from MAPAS coalition (Maryland Against Physician Assisted Suicide) - English only
8. Homily helps (for Feb. 4, Feb. 11, March 3 and March 10) - English only
9. Catholic Advocacy Network signup
10. Online only: webinars in English and Spanish



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# A Better Way Forward

## A message on physician assisted suicide from the Catholic Bishops of Maryland

January 2024

**We are deeply disappointed to learn that once again the Maryland General Assembly will debate whether to legalize physician assisted suicide.**

The central tenet guiding our opposition to this deadly proposal is that all human life is created in the image and likeness of God and therefore sacred.

In 2024, medical advancements and improvements in pain management mean we can make individuals with terminal illnesses comfortable and improve the quality of the remainder of their lives without them feeling the need to reluctantly choose a “dignified death.”

### Enhance End of Life Care

Therefore, it is incumbent upon each of us to ensure that those at the end of their lives can experience a death that doesn't include offering a form of suicide prescribed by a doctor.

We believe our elected officials should work to improve access to the network of care available to Maryland families by increasing access to palliative and hospice care, enhancing end-of-life education and training opportunities for physicians, and ensuring that there is appropriate diagnosis and treatment for depression and other mental and behavioral health issues.

### Legislation Lacks Safeguards

The proponents of this legislation claim that that this policy offers an “option” to a very small set of individuals who are suffering from a terminal illness with less than six months to live, claiming this option will help them maintain control and dignity during their final days on earth.

This legislation ignores the reality facing many in such conditions and is woefully lacking in the types of meaningful safeguards that would prevent this unnecessary and drastic option. Such safeguards include mandated mental health assessments, reporting requirements, safe disposal of unused medication or prohibitions against expansion of this program.

### Vulnerable Individuals are at Risk

In every state or country where this dangerous policy has been legalized grave abuses and expansion have occurred,



making assisted suicide available to far more people and not just those facing imminent death.

This legislation puts our most vulnerable brothers and sisters at risk of making decisions for themselves that are manipulated by factors such as disability, mental instability, poverty and isolation. Maryland has accurately recognized that suicide is a serious public health concern in the general population and has offered substantial resources to address the concern. At a time when our nation is grappling with how to address a frighteningly high suicide rate it is deeply illogical for the State of Maryland to be seeking ways to facilitate suicide for those with a terminal illness, all the while claiming such preventable and unnecessary deaths are somehow dignified.

### A Better Path Forward

There is a better path forward for the people of Maryland and it does not involve suicide. As Pope Francis reminds us: “We must accompany people towards death, but not provoke death or facilitate assisted suicide. I would point out that the right to care and treatment for all must always be prioritized, so that the weakest, particularly the elderly and the sick, are never discarded. Indeed, life is a right, not death, which must be welcomed, not administered. And this ethical principle applies to everyone, not just Christians or believers.”<sup>1</sup>

We urge all people of good will to demand that our lawmakers reject suicide as an end-of-life option and to choose the better, safer path that involves radical solidarity with those facing the end of their earthly journey. Let us choose the path that models true compassion and dignity to those facing end of life decisions and protects the most vulnerable from the deadly proposition of physician assisted suicide.

Most Reverend William E. Lori  
Archbishop of Baltimore

Wilton Cardinal Gregory  
Archbishop of Washington

Most Reverend William Koenig  
Bishop of Wilmington



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<sup>1</sup>Pope Francis, General Audience, Feb. 9, 2022

# Un mejor camino a seguir

Un mensaje sobre el suicidio asistido por un médico de los obispos católicos de Maryland | enero 2024



**Estamos profundamente decepcionados al saber que una vez más la Asamblea General de Maryland debatirá si se debe legalizar el suicidio asistido por un médico.**

El principio central que guía nuestra oposición a esta propuesta mortal es que toda vida humana es creada a imagen y semejanza de Dios y, por lo tanto, sagrada.

En el 2024, los avances médicos y las mejoras en el manejo del dolor significarán que podremos hacer que las personas con enfermedades terminales se sientan cómodas y mejorar la calidad del resto de sus vidas sin que sientan la necesidad de elegir de mala gana una “muerte digna”.

## Mejorar la atención al final de la vida

Por lo tanto, nos corresponde a cada uno de nosotros garantizar que aquellos al final de sus vidas puedan experimentar una muerte que no incluya ofrecer una forma de suicidio prescrita por un médico. Creemos que nuestros funcionarios electos deben trabajar para mejorar el acceso a la red de atención disponible para las familias de Maryland aumentando el acceso a cuidados paliativos, mejorando las oportunidades de educación y capacitación sobre el final de la vida para los médicos y garantizando que exista un diagnóstico y tratamiento adecuados para la depresión y otros problemas de salud mental y conductual.

## La legislación no tiene protecciones significativas

Los defensores de esta legislación afirman que esta política ofrece una “opción” a un grupo muy pequeño de personas que padecen una enfermedad terminal y les quedan menos de seis meses de vida, afirmando que esta opción les ayudará a mantener el control y la dignidad durante sus últimos días en la tierra.

Esta legislación ignora la realidad que enfrentan muchas personas en tales condiciones y lamentablemente carece del tipo de protecciones significativas que evitarían esta opción innecesaria y drástica. Dichas protecciones incluyen evaluaciones de salud mental obligatorias, requisitos de presentación de informes, eliminación segura de medicamentos no utilizados o prohibiciones contra la expansión de este programa.

## Pone en riesgo a las personas vulnerables

En todos los estados o países donde se ha legalizado esta peligrosa política se han producido graves abusos y expansión, lo que ha hecho que el suicidio asistido esté

disponible para muchas más personas y no sólo para aquellas que enfrentan una muerte inminente.

Esta legislación pone a nuestros hermanos y hermanas más vulnerables en riesgo de tomar decisiones por sí mismos manipuladas por factores como la discapacidad, la inestabilidad mental, la pobreza y el aislamiento. Maryland ha reconocido con precisión que el suicidio es un problema grave de salud pública en la población general y ha ofrecido recursos sustanciales para abordarlo. En un momento en el que nuestra nación está debatiendo cómo abordar una tasa de suicidio alarmantemente alta, es profundamente ilógico que el estado de Maryland esté buscando formas de facilitar el suicidio para aquellos con una enfermedad terminal, al mismo tiempo que afirma que esas muertes evitables e innecesarias son de alguna manera dignas.

## Un mejor camino a seguir

Existe un mejor camino a seguir para el pueblo de Maryland y no implica el suicidio. Como nos recuerda el Papa Francisco: “Debemos acompañar a las personas hacia la muerte, pero no provocar la muerte ni facilitar el suicidio asistido. Quisiera señalar que siempre debe darse prioridad al derecho a la atención y al tratamiento para todos, de modo que nunca se descarte a los más débiles, en particular a los ancianos y a los enfermos. De hecho, la vida es un derecho, no la muerte, que debe ser bienvenida, no administrada. Y este principio ético se aplica a todos, no sólo a los cristianos o creyentes”.<sup>1</sup>

Instamos a todas las personas de buena voluntad a exigir que nuestros legisladores rechacen el suicidio como una opción al final de la vida y elijan el camino mejor y más seguro que implique una solidaridad radical con quienes enfrentan el final de su viaje terrenal. Elijamos el camino que modele la verdadera compasión y dignidad para quienes enfrentan decisiones al final de la vida y proteja a los más vulnerables de la propuesta mortal del suicidio asistido por un médico.

Reverendísimo William E. Lori  
Arzobispo de Baltimore

Su Eminencia Wilton Cardinal Gregory  
Arzobispo de Washington

Reverendísimo William Koenig  
Obispo de Wilmington



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<sup>1</sup>Papa Francisco, Audiencia General, 9 de febrero de 2022

# PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE

FLOCKNOTE | BULLETIN

## What actually happens in a physician-assisted suicide?

A doctor prescribes a lethal drug cocktail that a person picks up at the local pharmacy, grinds up into soft food and injects. The person may not die for hours or even days. There are no requirements for a witness or notification of family. Assisted suicide isn't dignified, it's deadly. Tell your Maryland legislators: NO assisted suicide. Visit [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

## Physician-assisted suicide incentivizes denying cancer treatment

In states where assisted suicide is legal, insurance companies have turned down coverage for cancer treatment but offered to pay for suicide drugs instead. Stop this from happening in Maryland. Tell your state legislators: NO assisted suicide. Visit [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

## Physician-assisted suicide targets the elderly

Elderly in Maryland have a higher rate of suicide than any other age group – double the teen suicide rate. Yet a proposed physician assisted suicide bill does not require a mental health evaluation to screen for depression. Assisted suicide isn't compassionate, it's deadly. Tell your state legislators: NO assisted suicide. Visit [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

## Physician-assisted suicide tells people they're burdensome

In Oregon, data shows people request suicide drugs not for pain, but because they can't do the same activities that they could before, can't control bodily functions, feel they've lost dignity or feel they are a burden. Suicide drugs aren't the answer. Everyone deserves loving, supportive care, affirmation of their dignity, and to know that they are never a burden. Tell your state legislators: NO assisted suicide. Visit [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

## Physician-assisted suicide is dangerous for Maryland

If assisted suicide became legal, several kinds of lethal drugs would be prescribed and then be dispensed at your neighborhood pharmacy. Data shows that where assisted suicide is legal, up to 40% of the drugs are never used – and there are no requirements for their disposal. They could end up in the hands of our children. Tell your legislators: NO assisted suicide. Visit [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

## Disability rights activists oppose physician-assisted suicide

Major disability rights groups including the National Council on Disability oppose physician-assisted suicide. Disabled people already face prejudice from doctors and people who assume they're "better dead than disabled." Assisted suicide encourages this kind of prejudice. People with disabilities deserve care, not suicide. Tell your state legislators: NO assisted suicide. Visit [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

## Doctors oppose physician-assisted suicide

The American Medical Association, American Psychiatric Association, and dozens of other medical groups oppose physician-assisted suicide. The AMA says, "Physician-assisted suicide is fundamentally incompatible with the physician's role as healer." Physicians are entrusted with saving lives, not ending them. Tell your legislators: NO assisted suicide. Visit [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

# PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE

## FLOCKNOTE | BULLETIN

### **Marylanders deserve excellent pain management, not physician-assisted suicide**

Maryland has excellent, modern palliative care programs to alleviate suffering – no one's pain should be unmanageable in our state. Hospice care is paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance. Marylanders deserve the best in pain management and quality care, not suicide drugs. Tell your legislators: NO assisted suicide. Visit [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

### **Join the Maryland Catholic Advocacy Network**

Our state's General Assembly creates laws that affect us, our church, families and vulnerable neighbors. Put your faith into action with the Maryland Catholic Advocacy Network. Stay informed and join your voice to Catholics statewide on critical issues. Members get action alerts on critical issues plus occasional email updates from the Maryland Catholic Conference: [mdcatholic.org/joincan](http://mdcatholic.org/joincan) or text MDCATHOLIC to 52886.

## ESPAÑOL - ANUNCIOS PARA EL BOLETÍN/CORREO ELECTRÓNICO

### **¿Qué sucede realmente en un suicidio asistido por un médico?**

Un médico prescribe un cóctel de drogas letales que una persona compra en la farmacia local, lo muele hasta convertirlo en comida blanda y lo inyecta. Es posible que la persona no muera durante horas o incluso días. Además, no se exige la presencia de testigos o notificación a la familia. El suicidio asistido no es digno, es mortífero. Dícales "no" a los legisladores de Maryland: NO al suicidio asistido. Visite [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

### **El suicidio asistido por un médico incentiva la negativa a cubrir tratamientos contra el cáncer**

En aquellos estados donde el suicidio asistido es legal, las compañías de seguro se han negado a cubrir tratamientos contra el cáncer, pero sí ofrecen pagar medicamentos letales. No permita que esto suceda en Maryland. Dícales "no" a los legisladores de su Estado: NO al suicidio asistido. Visite [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

### **El suicidio asistido por un médico alienta el suicidio de los ancianos**

En Maryland, el índice de suicidios en ancianos es mayor que en cualquier otro grupo etario, el doble que en adolescentes. Sin embargo, un proyecto de ley de suicidio asistido por un médico no exigiría evaluaciones de salud mental para detectar casos de depresión. El suicidio asistido no es digno, es mortífero. Dícales "no" a los legisladores de su Estado: NO al suicidio asistido. Visite [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

### **El suicidio asistido por un médico les dice a las personas que son una carga**

En Oregon, los datos revelan que las personas solicitan medicamentos letales, no tanto para aliviar el dolor, sino porque no pueden hacer las mismas actividades que realizaban antes, no pueden controlar las funciones corporales, sienten que han perdido su dignidad o se consideran una carga. Los medicamentos letales no son la respuesta. Todo ser humano merece cuidado afectuoso y compasivo, afirmación de su dignidad y saber que no es ni será una carga. Dícales "no" a los legisladores de su Estado: NO al suicidio asistido. Visite [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

### **El suicidio asistido por un médico es peligroso para Maryland**

Si el suicidio asistido fuera legal, a la misma persona se le podrían recetar varios tipos de pastillas letales. Estos medicamentos letales se venderían en la farmacia de su vecindario. Los datos revelan que, en los lugares donde el suicidio asistido es legal, el 40 % de los medicamentos queda sin utilizar, y no hay requisitos para su desecho. Podrían terminar en manos de nuestros hijos. Dígales “no” a sus legisladores: NO al suicidio asistido. Visite [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

### **Los activistas defensores de los derechos de las personas con discapacidad se oponen al suicidio asistido por un médico**

Los grupos más importantes de defensa de los derechos de las personas con discapacidad, incluido el National Council on Disability, se oponen al suicidio médicamente asistido. Las personas con discapacidad ya enfrentan los prejuicios de médicos y personas que suponen que “es mejor estar muerto que discapacitado”. El suicidio asistido fomenta esta clase de prejuicios. Las personas con discapacidad merecen cuidado, no suicidio. Dígales “no” a los legisladores de su Estado: NO al suicidio asistido. Visite [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

### **Los médicos se oponen al suicidio asistido por un médico**

La American Medical Association (AMA, Asociación Médica Estadounidense), la American Psychiatric Association (Asociación Estadounidense de Psiquiatría) y decenas de otros grupos médicos se oponen al suicidio médicamente asistido. Según la AMA: “El suicidio asistido por un médico es, en esencia, incompatible con el rol del médico como sanador”. La tarea de los médicos es salvar vidas, no acabar con ellas. Dígales “no” a sus legisladores: NO al suicidio asistido. Visite [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

### **Los residentes de Maryland merecen un excelente tratamiento del dolor y no el suicidio asistido por un médico**

Maryland cuenta con excelentes y modernos programas de cuidados paliativos para aliviar el sufrimiento: el dolor de nadie debe ser inmanejable en nuestro Estado. Medicare, Medicaid y los seguros privados cubren la atención y los cuidados para enfermos terminales. Los residentes de Maryland merecen lo mejor en cuanto a tratamiento del dolor y cuidados de calidad, y no medicamentos letales. Dígales “no” a sus legisladores: NO al suicidio asistido. Visite [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas)

### **Únase a la Red de Defensa Católica de Maryland**

La Asamblea Legislativa de nuestro Estado sanciona leyes que nos afectan a nosotros, a nuestra Iglesia, a nuestras familias y a nuestros vecinos vulnerables. La Red de Defensa Católica de Maryland nos mantiene informados y nos da una voz. Usted recibirá información actualizada de la Conferencia Católica de Maryland (de manera ocasional, por correo electrónico), además de alertas de acción sobre los temas que elija: visite [mdcatholic.org/joincan](http://mdcatholic.org/joincan) o envíe el texto MDCATHOLIC al 52886

# PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE

## GENERAL INTERCESSIONS

For all who are about to die: that through our love, care, and devotion, they might know the beauty of life, as they prepare for death; We pray to the Lord:

For all people in nursing homes: that we would be inspired to visit them, and remind them of their great worth; We pray to the Lord:

For those denied adequate care: that we might stand up for their God-given dignity and assist them in their needs; We pray to the Lord:

For all who are forgotten or thrown away, and especially for the poor, the sick and the aged: that God might change our hearts and move us to love them as the image of Christ; We pray to the Lord:

For those who have grown tired of life, and especially for those tempted to suicide: that God might grant them patient endurance and the support of loved ones; We pray to the Lord:

For those tempted to despair because of constant pain: that they might join their suffering to the Cross of Christ; We pray to the Lord:

For nurses and all professionals who care for the sick and dying: that they will be given the grace to love each patient with the love of Christ, and to never see those they care for as a burden; We pray to the Lord:

For those who have grown weak or infirm: that we might see God's power in their fragility and experience a new revelation of God's love for them; We pray to the Lord:

For elderly parents and godparents: that the love and respect of their children might sustain them and bring them joy; We pray to the Lord:

That the sick may find strength and courage in the cross of Christ and discover the redemptive value of their suffering; We pray to the Lord:



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## ESPAÑOL - Intercesiones por los enfermos, los ancianos y los moribundos

Por todos los que están a punto de morir: para que a través de nuestro amor, cuidado y devoción, puedan conocer la belleza de la vida, mientras se preparan para la muerte; Roguemos al Señor:

Para todas las personas en hogares de ancianos: que nos inspire a visitarlos y recordarles su gran valor; Roguemos al Señor:

Para aquellos a quienes se les niega la atención adecuada: para que podamos defender su dignidad dada por Dios y ayudarlos en sus necesidades; Roguemos al Señor:

Por todos los olvidados o desechados, y especialmente por los pobres, los enfermos y los ancianos: para que Dios cambie nuestro corazón y nos mueva a amarlos como imagen de Cristo; Roguemos al Señor:

Por los que se han cansado de la vida, y especialmente por los tentados al suicidio: que Dios les conceda la paciencia y el apoyo de sus seres queridos; Roguemos al Señor:

Por los tentados a la desesperación por el dolor constante: para unir su sufrimiento a la Cruz de Cristo; Roguemos al Señor:

Por las enfermeras y todos los profesionales que atienden a los enfermos y moribundos: que se les conceda la gracia de amar a cada paciente con el amor de Cristo, y nunca ver a los que cuidan como una carga; Roguemos al Señor:

Para aquellos que se han debilitado o enfermado: para que podamos ver el poder de Dios en su fragilidad y experimentar una nueva revelación del amor de Dios por ellos; Roguemos al Señor:

Por los padres y padrinos ancianos: que el amor y el respeto de sus hijos los sostenga y les dé alegría; Roguemos al Señor:

Para que los enfermos encuentren fuerza y valor en la cruz de Cristo y descubran el valor redentor de su sufrimiento; Roguemos al Señor:



# PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE

## PRINTABLES AND GRAPHICS

# PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE

## PRAYER CARD

DOWNLOAD PDF: [WWW.MDCATHOLIC.ORG/PAS](http://WWW.MDCATHOLIC.ORG/PAS)



*love life, cherish life, defend life*

Saint John Paul II, Maryland 1995

### *Prayer against assisted suicide*

Merciful God, we pray with thanks and gratitude for the great spiritual gift of Saint John Paul II's apostolic life and mission.

Through his heavenly intercession we ask for the defeat of the physician assisted suicide bill and that the infinite worth of each human person is upheld through proper investment in palliative care.

Grant also that we may grow in love for You and proclaim boldly the love of Jesus Christ to all people.

Through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.



Novena: [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas) | Image: Basilica of the Assumption (*Catholic Review*)



*ama la vida, aprecia la vida, defiende la vida*

San Juan Pablo II, Maryland 1995

### *Oración contra el suicidio asistido*

Dios misericordioso, oramos con agradecimiento y gratitud por el gran don espiritual de la vida y misión apostólica de San Juan Pablo II.

Por su intercesión celestial pedimos la derrota del proyecto de ley de suicidio asistido por un médico y que el valor infinito de cada persona humana se mantenga mediante una inversión adecuada en cuidados paliativos.

Concédenos también que crezcamos en el amor por Ti y proclamemos con valentía el amor de Jesucristo a todas las personas.

Por Cristo, Nuestro Señor. Amén.



Novena: [mdcatholic.org/pas](http://mdcatholic.org/pas) | Imagen: Basilica de la Asuncion (*Catholic Review*)

# *Novena to Saint John Paul II* for life and against physician assisted suicide in Maryland

## ABOUT THE NOVENA

This novena, nine days of intercessory prayer, can be prayed starting anytime in January, February and March 2024 to urge the defeat of physician assisted suicide legislation in Maryland. We pray for a commitment by our elected officials to prioritize palliative care and support for those most at risk from physician assisted suicide: those with disabilities, who are nearing the end of life, or are struggling with a mental illness. We pray to Saint John Paul II, who showed us the value of human life through his own struggles and faith.

## *Novena*

### START THE NOVENA WITH THIS PRAYER EACH DAY

Merciful God, we pray with thanks and gratitude for the great spiritual gift of Saint John Paul II's apostolic life and mission.

Through his heavenly intercession we ask for the defeat of the physician assisted suicide bill and that the infinite worth of each human person is upheld through proper investment in palliative care.

Grant also that we may grow in love for You and proclaim boldly the love of Jesus Christ to all people. Through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

### DAILY QUOTE/REFLECTION:

Read the day's quote or reflection (on the next page)

### CONCLUDE THE NOVENA EACH DAY WITH THESE PRAYERS

#### The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth,  
as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily  
bread, and forgive us our  
trespasses,

as we forgive those who  
trespass against us,

and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

#### Hail Mary

Hail, Mary, full of grace,  
the Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou among women  
and blessed is the fruit of thy  
womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
pray for us sinners,  
now and at the hour of our  
death. Amen.

#### Glory be to the Father

Glory be to the Father  
and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning  
is now, and ever shall be  
world without end. Amen.



## Novena to Saint John Paul II | Day One

All life has "inestimable value" — "even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor, are masterpieces of God's creation, made in his own image, destined to live forever, and deserving of the utmost reverence and respect."

*Pope Francis, July 2013*

## Novena Day Two

"A society lacks solid foundations when, on the one hand, it asserts values such as the dignity of the person, justice and peace, but then, on the other hand, radically acts to the contrary by allowing or tolerating a variety of ways in which human life is devalued and violated, especially where it is weak or marginalized. Only respect for life can be the foundation and guarantee of the most precious and essential goods of society, such as democracy and peace."

*Evangelium Vitae, 101*

## Novena Day Three

"A society will be judged on the basis of how it treats its weakest members; and among the most vulnerable are surely the unborn and the dying."

*Pope Saint John Paul II, May 2000*

## Novena Day Four

"Respecting the dignity of people who are dying must involve respecting their lives, for without life there is no dignity."

*Cherishing Life, Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 2004*

## Novena Day Five

"Laws which legitimize the direct killing of innocent human beings through abortion or euthanasia are in complete opposition to the inviolable right to life proper to every individual; they thus deny the equality of everyone before the law."

*Evangelium Vitae, 72*

## Novena Day Six

"As believers, how can we fail to see that abortion, euthanasia and assisted suicide are a terrible rejection of God's gift of life and love? And as believers, how can we fail to feel the duty to surround the sick and those in distress with the warmth of our affection and the support that will help them always to embrace life?"

*Pope Saint John Paul II, 1999*

## Novena Day Seven

"Fragility, pain and illness are a difficult trial for everyone...they are an appeal for patience, for suffering-with; we cannot give in to...temptation to apply quick and drastic solutions, stirred by false compassion or by simple criteria of efficiency and economic saving....True compassion marginalizes no one...much less consider their death as a good thing."

*Pope Francis, June 2016*

## Novena Day Eight

"We deserve to grow old in a society that views our cares and needs with a compassion grounded in respect, offering genuine support in our final days. The choices we make together now will decide whether this is the kind of caring society we will leave to future generations. "

*To Live Each Day with Dignity, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011*

## Novena Day Nine

"Never tire of firmly speaking out in defense of life from its conception and do not be deterred from the commitment to defend the dignity of every human person with courageous determination. Christ is with you: be not afraid!"

*Pope Saint John Paul II, 2001*

# Novena a San Juan Pablo II

Por la vida y contra el suicidio asistido por un médico en Maryland

## SOBRE LA NOVENA

Esta novena, de nueve días de oración intercesora, se puede rezar a partir de enero, febrero y marzo de 2024 para instar a la derrota de la legislación sobre suicidio asistido por un médico en Maryland. Oramos por el compromiso de nuestros funcionarios electos de priorizar los cuidados paliativos y el apoyo a quienes corren mayor riesgo de suicidio asistido por un médico: aquellos con discapacidades, que se acercan al final de la vida o que luchan contra una enfermedad mental. Oramos a San Juan Pablo II, quien nos mostró el valor de la vida humana a través de su propia lucha y su fe.

## Novena

## COMIENZA LA NOVENA CON ESTA ORACIÓN TODOS LOS DÍAS

Dios misericordioso, oramos con agradecimiento y gratitud por el gran don espiritual de la vida y misión apostólica de San Juan Pablo II.

Por su intercesión celestial pedimos la derrota del proyecto de ley de suicidio asistido por un médico y que el valor infinito de cada persona humana se mantenga mediante una inversión adecuada en cuidados paliativos.

Concédenos también que crezcamos en el amor por Ti y proclamemos con valentía el amor de Jesucristo a todas las personas. Por Cristo, Nuestro Señor. Amén.

## CITA/REFLEXIÓN DIARIA:

Lea la cita o reflexión del día (en la página siguiente)

## CONCLUYE LA NOVENA CADA DÍA CON ESTAS ORACIONES

### Padre Nuestro

Padre Nuestro, que estás en cielo, santificado sea Tu nombre.  
Venga a nosotros tu Reino.  
Hágase Señor tu Voluntad, así en la Tierra como en el Cielo.  
Danos hoy nuestro Pan de cada día, y perdona nuestras ofensas, como también nosotros perdonamos a los que nos ofenden.  
No nos dejes caer en tentación, y líbranos de todo mal. Amén.

### Ave María

Dios te salve María, llena eres de Gracia, el Señor es contigo.  
Bendita eres entre todas las mujeres, y bendito es el fruto de tu vientre, Jesús.  
Santa María, Madre de Dios, ruega Señora por nosotros los pecadores ahora y en la hora de nuestra muerte. Amén.

### Gloria

Gloria al Padre, y al Hijo, y al Espíritu Santo.  
Como era en un principio, ahora y siempre, y por los siglos de los siglos. Amén.



*ama la vida, aprecia la vida, defiende la vida*

## Novena a San Juan Pablo II | Día Uno

Toda vida tiene un “valor inestimable”, incluso “los más débiles y vulnerables, los enfermos, los ancianos, los no nacidos y los pobres, son obras maestras de la creación de Dios, hechas a su propia imagen, destinadas a vivir para siempre y merecedoras de la mayor reverencia y respeto”.

*Papa Francisco, 28 de julio de 2013*

## Novena Día Dos

“Ni puede tener bases sólidas una sociedad que —mientras afirma valores como la dignidad de la persona, la justicia y la paz— se contradice radicalmente aceptando o tolerando las formas más diversas de desprecio y violación de la vida humana sobre todo si es débil y marginada. Sólo el respeto de la vida puede fundamentar y garantizar los bienes más preciosos y necesarios de la sociedad, como la democracia y la paz”.

*Evangelium Vitae, 101*

## Novena Día Tres

“Una sociedad será juzgada en función de cómo trata a sus miembros más débiles; y entre los más vulnerables seguramente se encuentran los no nacidos y los moribundos”.

*San Juan Pablo II, 5 de mayo de 2000*

## Novena Día Cuatro

“Respetar la dignidad de las personas que están muriendo debe implicar respetar sus vidas, porque sin vida no hay dignidad”.

*Cherishing Life, Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de Inglaterra y Gales, 2004*

## Novena Día Cinco

“Las leyes que, como el aborto y la eutanasia, legitiman la eliminación directa de seres humanos inocentes están en total e insuperable contradicción con el derecho inviolable a la vida inherente a todos los hombres, y niegan, por tanto, la igualdad de todos ante la ley”.

*Evangelium Vitae, 72*

## Novena Día Seis

“Como creyentes, no podemos menos de ver que el aborto, la eutanasia y el suicidio asistido son un terrible rechazo del don de la vida y del amor de Dios. Y como creyentes, no podemos menos de sentir el deber de dar a los enfermos y a los necesitados el calor de nuestro cariño y el apoyo que les ayudará siempre a abrazar la vida”.

*San Juan Pablo II, 1999*

## Novena Día Siete

“La fragilidad, el dolor y la enfermedad son una dura prueba para todos...son un llamado a la paciencia, al padecer-con; no se puede ceder a la tentación funcionalista de aplicar soluciones rápidas y drásticas, movidos por una falsa compasión o por meros criterios de eficiencia y ahorro económico....La verdadera compasión no margina a nadie...ni mucho menos considera como algo bueno su desaparición”.

*Papa Francisco, junio 2016*

## Novena Día Ocho

“Merecemos llegar a la vejez en una sociedad que ve nuestras preocupaciones y necesidades con compasión basada en el respeto y ofreciendo un apoyo genuino en nuestros últimos días. Las decisiones que tomamos juntos ahora decidirán si este es el tipo de sociedad solidaria que dejaremos a las generaciones futuras”.

*Vivir dignamente cada día, Conferencia de Obispos Católicos de los Estados Unidos, 2011*

## Novena Día Nueve

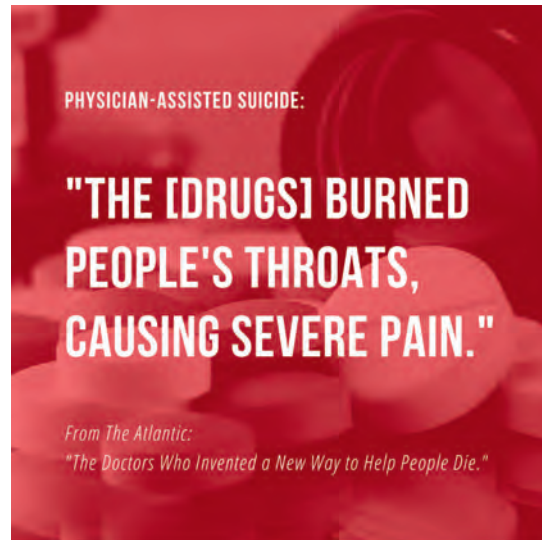
“No se cansen de hablar con firmeza en defensa de la vida desde su concepción y no se permitan disuadir del compromiso de defender con valiente determinación la dignidad de toda persona humana. Cristo está con ustedes: ¡no teman!”

*San Juan Pablo II, 2001*

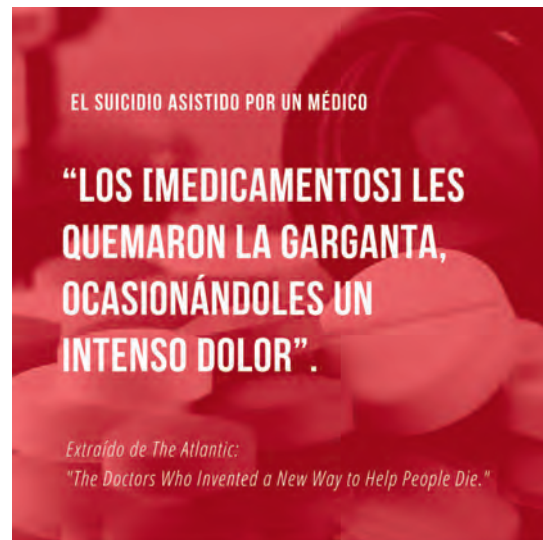
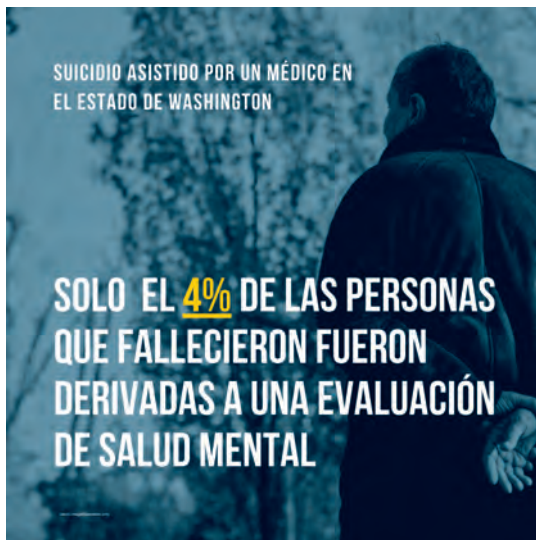
# PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE

## GRAPHICS

DOWNLOAD: [WWW.MDCATHOLIC.ORG/PAS](http://WWW.MDCATHOLIC.ORG/PAS)



DESCARGAR IMÁGENES: [WWW.MDCATHOLIC.ORG/PAS](http://WWW.MDCATHOLIC.ORG/PAS)





# Compassionate care. Not suicide.

Our friends and family matter to us. That's why it's so hard to understand how some lawmakers in Maryland are advocating our state legalize — even encourage — suicide for those we love.



## Say NO to physician assisted suicide in Maryland.



### Violates medical ethics to save lives and do no harm.

The **major medical associations oppose** physician assisted suicide. It's contrary to medical ethics codes.



### No accountability for lethal, addictive drugs.

The **lethal drugs are not monitored**. Many prescriptions go unused<sup>1</sup>, leaving opioids, barbiturates and other drugs to fall into the hands of teens or prescription drug dealers.



### Sends the wrong message that suicide is ok.

State leaders focus on suicide prevention<sup>2</sup> - except when it comes to physician assisted suicide by the elderly or ill - including those with mental illness. That's confusing and wrong.



### Lacks real safeguards to protect people.

Where it's legal, safeguards like **waiting periods are being shortened or waived**.<sup>3</sup> Reporting is limited and people are dying with no doctor present over hours or days via lethal multi-pill drug "cocktails."



### Makes people feel like a burden.

About half of those dying by assisted suicide **didn't want to be a "burden"** on their families or caregivers.<sup>4</sup> Individuals report pressure to die via physician assisted suicide vs. getting treatment for cancer, mental health needs, dementia, or even because they were homeless or suicidal.



### Leaves vulnerable people at risk.

Disability groups are fighting physician assisted suicide because it says their lives are not worth living. **Just 4%** of individuals who died from physician assisted suicide in Washington state **were referred for a mental health evaluation** before being prescribed lethal drugs.<sup>5</sup> Drugs have even been prescribed for eating disorders.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Oregon Death with Dignity Act 2022 Data Summary; California End of Life Option Act 2022 Data Report; <sup>2</sup>health.maryland.gov/bha/suicideprevention; <sup>3</sup>California SB380 (2021); <sup>4</sup>Oregon Death with Dignity Act 2022 Data Summary; <sup>5</sup>Washington State Department of Health, Death with Dignity Act Report 2019; <sup>6</sup><https://bit.ly/coloradosun03142022>

**MARYLAND**

**AGAINST PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE**



MarylandagainstPAS



StopPASmaryland stopassistedsuicideMD.org

# 10 REASONS PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE IS WRONG FOR MARYLAND

1

## No mental health evaluation required

There is no requirement that a person receive a psychological evaluation before a life-ending prescription is written. A doctor untrained in mental health is not sufficient to evaluate state of mind.

2

## No disposal plan for unused, addictive drugs

Some drugs being used in physician-assisted suicide (barbiturates or valium and morphine) are highly addictive and can cause life-threatening withdrawal, coma or death. Introducing large amounts of these drugs — with no controls in place to collect unused pills — will strain public health and addiction treatment resources.

3

## No counseling on how to use the drugs

Pharmacists aren't required to counsel a person on proper ingestion methods: crush up to 100 pills, add liquid and then drink this lethal mixture in 30 seconds. One of the lethal cocktails is known to burn your throat and is hard to keep down. Even then, death may not come for hours or days.

4

## No protection against insurance fraud

The bill mandates the cause of death be listed as natural causes, not the suicide drugs, bypassing industry standards. The bill also doesn't recognize a long-held "contestability period" policy of life insurers designed to protect against fraudulent policy purchases.

5

## No safeguards against coercion

The bill requires two witnesses to be present for a person's request for suicide, but not at the time of the suicide itself. People may be coerced into ingesting these drugs, or another person may administer the drug. This leaves serious potential for abuse.

6

## No way to accurately diagnose life expectancy

Individuals can request physician-assisted suicide if diagnosed with a terminal illness and given six months or less to live. But, medical prognoses are based on oft-incorrect averages, which people frequently outlive.

7

## No safeguards for the disabled

Leading disability rights groups recognize the many dangers the bill poses to those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, such as falling prey to undue influence from doctors or family members. This results in a lack of true informed consent.

8

## No family notification required

The prescribing physician must "recommend" that a person inform family members of his or her intention - but nothing in the law requires notification.

9

## No ID required to pick up lethal drugs

The lethal drugs are picked up at a local pharmacy. Maryland law doesn't require people to show ID at the time of pick-up, so virtually anyone can acquire up to 100 pills of the same drugs commonly used in executions.

10

## No requirement for medical supervision

Typically, no doctor, nurse, or independently licensed aid worker is present when a person ingests the lethal dose. If something goes wrong, you are on your own to deal with any physical or emotional complications.

**MARYLAND**

**AGAINST PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE**

**WARNING: PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE IS DEADLY**

We are disability advocates, elder abuse lawyers, members of the medical community, patient advocates and faith-based organizations. We are the Maryland Against Physician Assisted Suicide coalition. Join us. [www.stopassistedsuicidemd.org](http://www.stopassistedsuicidemd.org)

RESOURCES TO OPPOSE LEGALIZED  
**PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE**

HOMILY HINTS | MARYLAND 2024

SUNDAY, FEB. 4, 2024

[Job 7:1-4, 6-7](#) | [1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23](#) | [Mark 1:29-39](#)

### Key Points

- Despair and suffering are a part of life that we all experience at some point, but God has made sure that we are not alone and that suffering does not have the last word.
- While it is tempting to avoid suffering at all costs, as our society urges us to do even through practices like assisted suicide, we must be willing to accept God's plan for our lives and allow his accompaniment to redeem and transform our suffering.
- The Maryland General Assembly is currently considering a bill to legalize assisted suicide in the state. Please contact the legislature and encourage your senator and delegates to vote no on the bill.

### Additional Ideas

- In the first reading, we see Job's intense despair over his life. So many of us can empathize with his despair. We all have or will at some point struggle with despair, whether due to the loss of a loved one, financial difficulties, an illness or any number of other challenges. Suffering is part of life. But as we see in the Gospel and as Job eventually discovers, it does not have the last word.
- God sent his son, Jesus, to suffer and die for us. In a radical way, God made himself present with us in our suffering. In the Gospel, we see Jesus healing people and casting out demons. He walks with people in their suffering, both physical and spiritual, and through his presence transforms it. Jesus continues to offer this transformative accompaniment to us today if we are willing to accept it.
- But so often we can feel like we must avoid suffering at all costs. This attitude is especially prevalent in our society today. In its elevation of pleasure as the highest good our society even seeks to legalize the practice of assisted suicide as a method of avoiding suffering. Advocates claim that assisted suicide is a compassionate option for those suffering from severe illness because a life of suffering is no longer worth living.
- However, this practice, in its desperate attempt to eliminate physical suffering, forgets that there is greater meaning to our lives beyond mere pleasure. Every one of us was created by God so that we could know and love him, and he could love us. Even in our suffering God never stops loving us – and therefore our lives continue to have meaning. By rejecting God's plan for our lives, assisted suicide exacerbates our spiritual pain and removes the possibility of the transformative and redemptive accompaniment that we see in the Gospel.
- We must bravely reject our culture that seeks pleasure and avoids pain at all costs. Instead, we must place our trust in God, as Job does and be willing to embrace the accompaniment of Jesus found in the Gospel and its transformative effects on our suffering. Please tell your state senator and delegates to vote no on the bill to legalize physician assisted suicide so we can restore our culture's recognition of the greater value and purpose of our lives found in our relationship with God.

RESOURCES TO OPPOSE LEGALIZED  
**PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE**  
HOMILY HINTS | MARYLAND 2024

SUNDAY, FEB. 11, 2024

[Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46](#) | [1 Cor 10:31–11:1](#) | [Mark 1:40-45](#)

### Key Points

- Those with severe illness are often pushed aside and discarded by society – this is how advocates of assisted suicide treat the sick, elderly, and dying.
- But Jesus calls us to a higher standard – to recognize the inherent dignity of the most sick and vulnerable in our society and support and care for them.
- The Maryland General Assembly currently is considering a bill to legalize assisted suicide – please follow Jesus' call and contact the legislature and tell them to vote no on the bill.

### Additional Ideas

- The first reading shows us how severely illness can impact people, both physically and spiritually. In ancient times, the severity and contagiousness of leprosy would force people into isolation and created a powerful stigma around lepers.
- In our own time, even with incredible medical advancements, there often is still a stigma surrounding the poor, sick and elderly. It is easy for our society, which is so focused on productivity, to label them as burdens and dismiss their lives as not worth living.
- Often, this dismissive attitude and neglect for the inherent dignity of these people is disguised as compassion. This is seen especially in advocacy for assisted suicide. Advocates claim that suicide is actually what is best for the sick person or for society as a whole. But ultimately support for assisted suicide rests on the view that the poor, sick or elderly do not have value anymore.
- In the Gospel, we see Jesus reject this view and challenge us to live up to a higher standard of compassion that recognizes the dignity and value of every human life. Despite his whole society telling him that rejection of lepers is right and despite the powerful stigma against being near them, Jesus, in a defiant recognition of the man's inherent dignity and value, reaches out and touches the leper to heal him.
- We too are called to reach out and stand up for the inherent dignity and value of the sick and vulnerable, even while our society is telling us to reject them. The Maryland General Assembly is currently considering a bill to legalize assisted suicide in the state of Maryland. This bill treats the most sick and vulnerable in our society as burdens whose lives are no longer worth living. Let us stand up for the dignity of every person and imitate Jesus by contacting our state representatives to tell them to vote no to legalizing physician assisted suicide.

RESOURCES TO OPPOSE LEGALIZED  
**PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE**

HOMILY HINTS | MARYLAND 2024

SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2024

[Exodus 20:1-17](#) | [1 Cor 1:22-25](#) | [John 2:13-25](#)

### Key Points

- The 10 Commandments demand more of us than it may seem on the surface – false idols can include things like money, fame or pleasure, and killing includes any failure to respect the inherent dignity of the human person.
- Our culture tends to elevate pleasure as an idol above all else, which leads it to violate the dignity of the human person by concluding that some of the most vulnerable in our society, the sick and elderly, no longer have value – people are treated as commodities, like the money changers in the temple.
- The Maryland General Assembly is currently considering a bill to legalize assisted suicide – please follow Christ’s example in the temple and tell your representatives to vote no on the bill.

### Additional Ideas

- Often when we look at the list of 10 Commandments it can be easy to dismiss some of them as not really relevant to us. For instance, we might think that the commandments to not have any gods besides the one God and to not kill are pretty easily satisfied. Most of us have probably not built any golden calves or committed murder. However, these commandments include much more than the obvious prohibitions against building idols and committing murder.
- Whenever we place greater importance on something in our lives other than God we sin against the first commandment. This can be big things like fame and fortune or small things like skipping Mass to watch a football game. One of the most common false idols in our culture today is pleasure.
- Our culture emphasizes the pursuit and attainment of pleasure above all else. Pleasure has become the measure of goodness and value, so much so that some people think a life without adequate pleasure is no longer worth living. So extreme is our culture’s worship of pleasure that Maryland is now considering legalizing assisted suicide.
- This leads into the other commandment: You shall not kill. Any time we do not act in a way that respects the inherent dignity of the human person we sin against this commandment. When we treat people like commodities whose value can shift depending on their state in life, we act like the money changers in the temple whom Jesus reprimanded. We fail to acknowledge that each one of us is also a temple, with immeasurable worth given to us by God.
- Assisted suicide elevates pleasure as an idol over God and disrespects the dignity of the human person. It preys on the weak and vulnerable in our society, treating them like commodities by making judgments about some people’s lives being worth more than others. The 10 Commandments demand more than refraining from building golden calves – please reach out to your representatives in the Maryland General Assembly and ask that they vote no on the bill to legalize assisted suicide.

RESOURCES TO OPPOSE LEGALIZED  
**PHYSICIAN ASSISTED SUICIDE**

HOMILY HINTS | MARYLAND 2024

SUNDAY, MARCH 10, 2024

[2 Chr 36:14-16, 19-23](#) | [Ephesians 2:4-10](#) | [John 3:14-21](#)

### Key Points

- God loves each of us completely and unconditionally – we are his handiwork, which gives us inherent dignity and value.
- Advocates of assisted suicide attempt to disguise the practice as compassionate “aid in dying” but the reality is it treats some people’s lives as worth less than others by permitting the active killing of the most vulnerable.
- The Maryland General Assembly is currently considering a bill to legalize assisted suicide. Please embrace God’s love for each of us, his handiwork, and contact your delegate and senator and tell them to vote no on the bill.

### Additional Ideas

- In the second reading and the Gospel today, we see just how much God loves us. We hear about how God decided to send his only Son to save us from our sins, purely out of his abundance of mercy and his love for us. We are reminded that God loves us no matter what, “even when we were dead in our transgressions.” There is nothing we can do and nothing that can happen to us that will make God stop loving us and make us lose our worth.
- Additionally, we hear at the end of the second reading that “we are his handiwork, created in Christ Jesus for the good works that God has prepared in advance, that we should live in them.” Each one of us was made specially by God in his own image and likeness. Because of this, every single one of us has immeasurable value and an inherent dignity that can never go away.
- There are some people in our society, however, who refuse to acknowledge the dignity and value of some of the most vulnerable members of our community. They look at the elderly, the sick, and the dying, and rather than seeing the incredible beauty and value of their lives as beings that are made by and loved by God, they dismiss them as better off dead.
- However, as the Gospel warns us, “everyone who does wicked things hates the light.” So the advocates of assisted suicide attempt to disguise the evil of the practice. Some Maryland legislators refer to it as “aid in dying” so that it may sound compassionate and be confused with the legitimate practice of palliative care or hospice. However, whereas palliative care and hospice respect the dignity of the human person by providing pain relief to those with serious terminal illnesses, the “aid in dying” proposed by the Maryland General Assembly would legalize the active killing of those with serious illnesses.
- Assisted suicide fails to respect the inherent dignity of the human person that comes from our being the handiwork of God who loves each one of us unconditionally, whether we are healthy or seriously ill. Advocates attempt to disguise the practice as compassionate, but the reality is that it declares some people’s lives to be worth less than others. Please reach out to your representatives in the Maryland General Assembly and tell them to vote no on this bill to legalize assisted suicide.



# Put your faith into action.

Join the **Catholic Advocacy Network**, a growing movement of Catholics across Maryland who advocate for human dignity, children and families, and social and economic justice in our state.

## ADVOCACY THAT WORKS.

Connect with state elected officials in seconds  
Learn more with backgrounders | resources | legislative updates  
Speakers for parishes and groups  
Virtual Catholic advocacy day

## JOIN NOW!

Go to [mdcatholic.org/joincan](https://mdcatholic.org/joincan)  
Text MDCATHOLIC to 52886



The Maryland Catholic Conference is the official statewide public policy organization for the Catholic Church.  
Archdiocese of Baltimore | Archdiocese of Washington | Diocese of Wilmington | [mdcatholic.org](https://mdcatholic.org) | @mdcatholic



# Pon tu fe en acción.

Únete a la **Red de Abogacía Católica**, un creciente movimiento de católicos en todo Maryland que abogan por la dignidad humana, los niños y las familias, y la justicia social y económica en nuestro estado.

## ABOGACÍA QUE FUNCIONA.

Conéctate en segundos con funcionarios estatales electos  
Obtén más información con los expertos | recursos | actualizaciones legislativas  
Ponentes para parroquias y grupos  
Jornada virtual de abogacía católica

### ¡ÚNETE AHORA!

Visita [mdcatholic.org/joincan](https://mdcatholic.org/joincan)  
Textea MDCATHOLIC al 52886



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