

# WORD OF LIFE: SPECIAL EDITION

## Parish Leader Kit – Catholic Care of the Sick and Dying

### FEATURED RESOURCES...

#### *Samaritanus bonus*

In 2020, the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith released the letter [\*Samaritanus bonus\*](#), “on the care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life.” The letter reaffirms the Church’s teaching on care for those who are critically ill or dying and offers additional pastoral guidance for increasingly complex situations at the end of life.

Several resources are available to help you share the message of *Samaritanus bonus*, including:

- [\*Samaritanus bonus: A Compendium\*](#)  
The compendium contains summaries of each section of *Samaritanus bonus* and was prepared to serve as a resource on and introduction to the letter. It highlights all the central themes of the letter in a condensed format.
- [\*Samaritanus bonus: Study Guide\*](#)  
The study guide is designed to be used in group settings to discuss and reflect on *Samaritanus bonus*, but it can also be used for personal study. The study guide provides Scripture passages, prayers, and discussion questions to help participants reflect more deeply on the letter and its central themes and teachings. It can be used in conjunction with either the “*Samaritanus bonus: A Compendium*” or with the full document.
- [\*The Witness of the Good Samaritan: Palliative Care and Hospice\*](#)  
This four-page summary article offers a brief overview of key points from *Samaritanus bonus* with a specific focus on what it says about palliative care and hospice.

#### Articles

*Pastoral and educational articles on various end-of-life issues.*

- [\*Caring for Loved Ones at Life’s End\*](#)
- [\*Catholic Considerations for Our Earthly Passing\*](#)
- [\*Advance Medical Directives: Planning for Your Future\*](#)
- [\*Top Reasons to Oppose Assisted Suicide\*](#)
- [\*Killing the Pain, Not the Patient: Palliative Care vs. Assisted Suicide\*](#)
- [\*Every Suicide is Tragic\*](#)

#### Prayers

*Prayers centered on end-of-life concerns.*

- [\*Pope St. John Paul II: Prayer of the Elderly\*](#)
- [\*“Every Life is Worth Living”\*](#)
- [\*“Prayer to St Joseph, Defender of Life”\*](#)
- [\*“Prayer of Commendation of the Dying”\*](#)

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### Intercessions for Life

*These intentions are appropriate for inclusion in the Prayer of the Faithful at Sunday Mass. They can also be printed in the weekly bulletin, included in parish Holy Hours or Rosaries, featured in email newsletters, shared on social media platforms, or prayed during personal or family prayer.*

For those nearing the end of life:  
May they be given the grace to persevere in faith  
and place their trust in God,  
as they prepare in hope for eternity with Christ;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For all those receiving hospice care:  
May the way they are attended to  
bear witness to the gift of their lives;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For all those nearing death:  
That their faith will grow ever stronger,  
as they prepare in hope  
to share eternal life with Christ;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

Inspired by the witness of the Good Samaritan,  
may we readily provide care, support,  
and loving accompaniment  
to those who are sick or dying;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For all who accompany the dying at life's end:  
May they faithfully remain at the bedside of the sick  
as Mary and the Beloved Disciple  
remained with Christ at the foot of the Cross;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For providers of hospice and palliative care:  
May they be filled with a profound sense of hope  
as they confront suffering and death  
in their service to human life;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For the Church:  
May we become men and women  
who proclaim Christ's healing power  
and provide care for our neighbors,  
especially at life's end;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

May all who provide care to the dying  
receive adequate support and spiritual assistance;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For the sick, suffering, and those near death:  
May they receive adequate care which embraces  
their physical, psychological, and spiritual needs  
as they journey toward eternal life;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For the sick, suffering, and dying:  
That through the closeness of the Church  
they may experience the nearness of Christ  
who accompanies them on the journey to his  
Father's house;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For families of the dying:  
May they recognize that their role is irreplaceable  
and accompany their loved ones  
with faith and hope in Christ;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

For the Church:  
May our way of caring for our suffering neighbor  
foster an encounter with the Lord of life,  
who pours the oil of consolation  
and the wine of hope onto wounds;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

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

For an end to assisted suicide and euthanasia:  
May we build a culture that cherishes  
the sick, suffering, and elderly among us;  
*We pray to the Lord:*

## Bulletin Quotes & Educational Tools

*These short quotes can be printed in weekly bulletins, featured in email newsletters, and shared on websites and social media platforms. Each quote comes from a full-length educational resource that can also be shared digitally or through printed materials.*

### The Witness of the Good Samaritan

“The ultimate foundation of human dignity lies in the reality that God became man to save us and call us into communion with him. The Good Samaritan, who goes out of his way to aid an injured man, symbolizes Jesus, who encounters humanity in need of salvation and cares for our wounds and sufferings. Despite our best efforts, it can sometimes be difficult to recognize the profound value of human life when we see its full weakness and fragility. Yet, the faithful care of human life until its natural end is entrusted to *every* person.”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

“The Witness of the Good Samaritan: Palliative Care and Hospice”



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### Palliative Care and Hospice

“Death is a decisive moment in the human person’s encounter with God the Savior. Helping the Christian to experience this moment with spiritual assistance is a supreme act of charity. It encompasses the patient with the solid support of human relationships to accompany them and open them to hope. Palliative care and hospice are precious and crucial instruments in the care of patients with serious and complex chronic or terminal illnesses, and they help provide comfort to both the patients and their families.”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

“The Witness of the Good Samaritan: Palliative Care and Hospice”



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### Preparing for Our Earthly Passing

“We know earthly death is not the end, but rather the door through which we must pass to gain eternal life. Because of our belief and hope in the Resurrection, we can face death not with fear, but with preparation... We prepare for eternal life by choosing to love and follow God now, in our daily lives and decisions. For example, through prayer and regular reception of the sacraments, especially Confession and the Eucharist, we obtain grace to live in ever-deeper communion with God and with one another in lives of faith, charity, and justice.”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

“Catholic Considerations for Our Earthly Passing”



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### Caring for Loved Ones

“An old Irish proverb says, ‘It is in the shelter of each other that the people live.’ Indeed, we are created to depend upon one another and walk together in suffering. But when family members or friends approach life’s end, we may not know how best to ‘shelter’ them. Here are some concrete ways we can compassionately care for them: [usccb.org/end-of-life-care](https://usccb.org/end-of-life-care).”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

“Caring for Loved Ones at Life’s End”

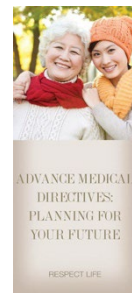


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## Advance Medical Directives

“Human life is good and to be protected. All medical decisions ought to reflect this core belief. Yet black-and-white answers to our questions about end-of-life issues are not always possible, and it can be very difficult to know how to make medical decisions. Each and every human person is distinct and unrepeatable, and each medical situation may be unique. In each set of circumstances we need to judge whether a given treatment will provide real benefit to the patient, without causing harm or other burdens that are out of proportion to the good being done. We should each be prepared for those difficult situations when medical decisions must be made.”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities  
“Advance Medical Directives: Planning for Your Future”

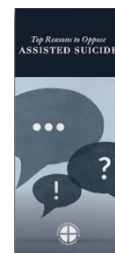


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## Opposing Assisted Suicide

“Assisted suicide proponents are pursuing an aggressive nationwide campaign to advance their agenda through legislation, ballot measures, litigation, and public advertising, targeting states they see as most susceptible to their message. Some polls indicate that the public is receptive to the general concept of assisted suicide. But the same polls show that when the public learns about the dangers of assisted suicide, especially for those who are poor, elderly, disabled, or without access to good medical care, their views shift against the practice.”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities,  
“Top Reasons to Oppose Assisted Suicide”

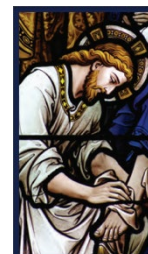


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## Every Life is Worth Living

“Heavenly Father, thank you for the precious gift of life. Help us to cherish and protect this gift, even in the midst of fear, pain, and suffering. Give us love for all people, especially the most vulnerable, and help us bear witness to the truth that every life is worth living.”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities  
“Every Life is Worth Living”



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## Palliative Care vs. Assisted Suicide

“Do we see people as the problem, such that our responsibility begins and ends with helping patients kill themselves? Or do we see seriously ill patients as fellow human beings who deserve our love and solutions for their problems? Will we succumb to the “false mercy” of assisted suicide, or will we endorse what Pope St. John Paul II called “the way of love and true mercy”? Will we dedicate ourselves to providing genuinely compassionate care, as a society and for our own loved ones? Our answer today determines the care available now and for years to come.”

USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities  
“Killing the Pain, Not the Patient: Palliative Care vs. Assisted Suicide”



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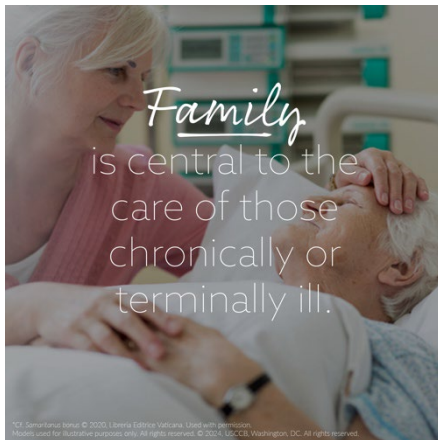


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## Bulletin Art

You are welcome to download and use these images in bulletins, newsletters, parish websites, and social media. (Images may not be altered in any way, other than the size.)

Download: <https://www.usccb.org/resources/catholic-care-sick-and-dying-graphics>



## Bulletin Boxes

These quarter-page summaries of full articles can be printed in bulletins and newsletters, when space is at a premium. Each bulletin box includes the website for accessing the full article.

**Advance Medical Directives: Planning for Your Future**

Read the full version at [respectlife.org/advance-directives](https://respectlife.org/advance-directives).

Human life is good and to be protected. All medical decisions ought to reflect this core belief. Yet some medical and legal documents used to define a patient's future care can be harmful. No matter how well-crafted, they can't predict all the possible scenarios and best courses of action. In each set of circumstances, we need to judge whether a given treatment will provide real benefit to the patient, without causing harm or disproportionate burdens. The safest option is to designate a health care agent to make decisions if you become incapable of doing so. It's best to appoint a responsible, trustworthy person who understands and shares your Catholic values, and can apply them when the need arises.

**The safest option is to designate a health care agent.**

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**Catholic Considerations for Our Earthly Passing**

Read the full version at [respectlife.org/end-of-life-considerations](https://respectlife.org/end-of-life-considerations).

We prepare for eternal life by choosing to love and follow God. Our journey with Christ includes equipping our consciences to make morally good judgments at the end of life. While no summary can substitute for thorough catechesis, one thing is clear: we are entrusted by God with the gift of life. This obliges us to make use of appropriate, effective medical care. The Church affirms the inviolable dignity of every person, regardless of the duration or extent of the person's incapacity. Nothing diminishes the sanctity of a person's life, or the obligation to protect and care for it. Those who are sick should not be alone, and, even after death, accompaniment continues by praying for those who have passed.

**We are entrusted by God with the gift of life.**

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**Top Reasons to Oppose Assisted Suicide**

Read the full version at [respectlife.org/reasons-against-assisted-suicide](https://respectlife.org/reasons-against-assisted-suicide).

Some polls indicate that the public is receptive to assisted suicide. But the same polls show that people's views shift when they learn about its dangers—especially the dangers for those who are poor, elderly, disabled, or without access to good medical care. Consider that in Oregon and California, some patients' health insurance offered to pay for assisted suicide, but not treatment. And in states where assisted suicide is legal, often no psychiatric evaluation or treatment is required. Additionally, assisted suicide fosters discrimination by creating two classes of people: those whose suicides we spend millions of dollars to prevent and those whose suicides we assist and treat as a positive good.

**Assisted suicide fosters discrimination.**

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[respectlife.org](https://respectlife.org)