

ADVANCE HEALTH CARE DIRECTIVE

(Under Authority of California Probate Code Sections 4670 et seq.)

CATHOLIC TEACHING CONCERNING EUTHANASIA

Death Is A Normal Part of the Human Condition. Death is neither to be feared and avoided at all costs, nor to be sought and directly procured.

Euthanasia Is Wrong. Euthanasia is not permitted. Euthanasia is defined as the intentional ending of human life by act or omission in order to relieve suffering.

Pain Relief. Modern pain control techniques do not ordinarily shorten life. However, the use of medicine to treat severe pain is acceptable even if, hypothetically, it were to shorten life. In any event, pain control is not the same as euthanasia, since death is not the objective of the treatment. Maintenance of lucidity is an important element in preparing for death, but severe pain should be alleviated to the extent possible.

Proportionality of Life-Sustaining Medical Treatment. Decisions to administer, refuse, or discontinue life-sustaining treatment should be based on the concept of proportionality. One does not have an obligation to pursue a life-sustaining treatment if its risks or burdens are disproportionate to its expected benefits. The concept of burden is broad and must be individually assessed; it includes aspects such as the discomfort, risk, and expense of the treatment in question.

Nutrition and Hydration (Food and Water). The failure to provide a patient with nutrition and hydration – *for the purpose of ending the patient's life or accelerating the patient's death* – constitutes euthanasia and is always wrong, even when nourishment must be provided by artificial means. However, situations can arise where the provision of nutrition and hydration no longer provides substantial benefits and is actually burdensome to a dying patient. In such cases, the provision of food and water, by artificial means or otherwise, may no longer be appropriate, even if the dying process is *incidentally* hastened.

Consultation with Medical and Spiritual Advisors. It is not always easy for patients, family, or health care agents to apply the principles of proportionality to a particular situation. Consultation with medical advisors is almost always required in order to evaluate potential benefits, burdens, and risks. Consultation with competent spiritual advisors may help patients, family, or health care agents arrive at objective and honest decisions.

More Detailed Guidance Is Available. Most of the foregoing principles are drawn from the *Declaration on Euthanasia* which was promulgated in 1980 by the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Additional Church documents and guidance can be found on the website of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: www.usccb.org/prolife.

Part 1 – POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE

1.1 **Primary Appointment.** I, _____, hereby designate the following individual as my agent to make health care decisions for me:

Print Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Home Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Work Phone: _____

Cell Phone: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

