

Long Island Coalition for Life Educational Trust – 2014 Oratory Contest

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The Cruel Truth of Mercy Killing

When someone makes the claim that they are pro life, most people's minds quickly jump to the idea of abortion. To call oneself a person who is pro life includes both supporting the rights of the unborn, and supporting the dignity of life from conception to natural death. Sadly, many people neglect the picture of Euthanasia even when, as the National Health Service notes, over 130,000 people are killed each year by their doctors. I personally feel that euthanasia is not only a misuse of power by doctors but is also a blatant disregard for the lives of the terminally ill.

Euthanasia is legal in many countries in Europe including Belgium, Denmark, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Euthanasia is seen as a serious threat to human dignity. The Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us "An act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator." It is very clear that these two acts, Euthanasia and Physician assisted suicide, are wrong. The question remains, why? We can't just blindly follow what a church teaches. To be Pro life means that we should understand fully why we believe what we believe. This question can be answered with three main points.

First, we can see that euthanasia does not help people but rather hurts them because they lose the benefits of suffering. Now I know this statement sounds contradictory but in his world famous book *A Man's Search for Meaning*, Victor Frankl delves into the idea and concept of Barbed wire syndrome. In the Nazi Concentration camp at Auschwitz, with a loss of hope came a lack of desire to live. The prisoners believed that there was nothing to live for and wished to commit suicide. Frankl made a promise to himself to never "touch the wire" be-

cause he knew his life had meaning. He was suffering for all of those friends he had lost in the camps, and was suffering for all of his loved ones who no longer had a voice due to the Nazi suppression. Pope Saint John Paul II said, "True compassion leads to sharing another's pain; it does not kill the person whose suffering we cannot bear." Euthanasia goes completely against the meaning and value of suffering and directly contradicts the words of Saint John Paul II. Why should we accept the murder of others just because of their physical condition? The act itself inherently lowers the value of human lives and goes directly against the will of God.

This transitions into my second point, Euthanasia directly contradicts God's plan. Suffering is the ultimate giving of oneself to God's will. The perfect example of this is Jesus himself. Before he was captured by the Romans, Jesus pleaded with God and asked if there was any way he could not go through the pain of the coming days. If he truly wanted to, he could have proven he was God to his accusers and would not have suffered. What we saw however was an extreme display of love in the form of suffering. Jesus suffered for us and eternally showed that suffering was a way to grow closer to God. This is where Euthanasia comes in. The humanitarian idea behind "mercy killing" is that we allow these people to pass peacefully away. Just like abortion interrupts God's plan for life, so does euthanasia. The time this person still had on earth could have been very fruitful. The final days with a loved one can be some of the most important relationship building days of that person's life. We can also look at the idea of emotional comparability. When a person is told they are going to die and the doctors can't do anything to help them, they will be emotionally compromised. They will therefore be more likely to give up hope and want to be euthanized. When Euthanasia is legal, it makes people think that it is alright to do something that we know to be wrong. Just like if sealing was legal, more people would do it. This inherently leads to a society of people who think an immoral action is alright because their government allows it.

Finally, even if we take God out of the picture, Euthanasia is still bad for society. This hurts the society in a few ways. First, it distorts the public's view of the issue. People stop looking at euthanasia as a moral issue and just see it as a policy issue. This is a terrible occurrence in society because it turns off policy maker's moral compasses. Second, it undermines medical research. Looking at this logically, there is no need to find a cure for a disease quickly if it rarely causes people pain because patients have already been euthanized before symptoms can present themselves. This leads to slower research and inherently the loss of more lives in the long run. This is never good for a society because the societal value of a life is tremendous. Finally, euthanasia is a slippery slope. We are currently speaking of euthanasia for the terminally ill, but eventually, it won't stop there. Even today we can see that voluntary euthanasia is not always the case. According to the Rummelink Report, commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Justice, there were over 3,000 deaths from euthanasia in the Netherlands in 1990. More than 1,000 of these were not voluntary. This alone can show us that Euthanasia for society is risky business and should not be allowed for societies sake.

Euthanasia goes against the natural order of things by not allowing people to suffer, and it goes directly against God's plan by depriving people of the redeeming power of this suffering. If someone calls themselves pro life, they cannot just say they are against abortion, they must also be against the fundamental denial of the right to life in all of its forms, one of which being euthanasia.

Thank you.