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One feature of the legalisation of Assisted Suicide in other jurisdictions is that, once it becomes lawful, it is then presented and perceived as something good to do. Instead of being surrounded by love and care, people who are already vulnerable and dependent on others due to their illness, are made to feel that assisted suicide would be “the decent thing to do”.

Assisted suicide presumes that there will be somebody with the required skills who is prepared to “assist” in bringing about the death of another person. Wherever assisted suicide is legalised, healthcare professionals are assumed to be the “suitably qualified persons” because they are already licensed to use drugs. It is important to be clear that healthcare professionals are given privileged access to the human body and to drugs for the express purpose of healing and alleviating pain. Any suggestion that they should be expected to assist and, under certain circumstances, actually perform the act that ends the life of another person, is seriously damaging to the ethos and the credibility of the healthcare professions.

Jesus gave us the image of the good Samaritan as the model for our compassion and our solidarity with those who find themselves vulnerable and who fear being abandoned in their final illness. The Good Samaritan is one who “crosses over”, who “binds up wounds” and who, most important of all “stays with” the person for as long as is required.

There is much that we can do to foster a culture of life. We can begin by overcoming our fear of talking honestly about death and dying. Dying is as natural and universal as living and breathing yet our society can make it difficult for people to talk about it. As Christians, of course, our faith in the Resurrection of Jesus will stand to us. For some, if not for all, the support of prayer, and the opportunity to share faith can be of great help.

The Hospice Care Movement fosters a culture of living well until the end. By doing normal things with people who are terminally ill, we can contribute to fostering their sense of being “normal”, which can often be undermined by the “routine of illness”. The experience of presence, companionship and even the acceptance of limitation and dependency, when we take time to appreciate them, can greatly enrich the later stages of life.

The attitude of Jesus towards the sick and towards those who are in any way marginalised, has much to teach us about the value of time spent caring for one another. Many of us, at times, are called to be carers in our own circle of family and friends. Others may find it possible to care for the carers. The bonds of friendship and solidarity that are developed and strengthened in caring relationships, extend beyond the carer and the one who is cared for to the whole of society.

For more material on this theme, please see www.councilforlife.ie/Day4Life

SUNDAY 3RD OCTOBER 2021, 27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Message of the Irish Catholic Bishops for the Day for Life

The fragility of life and the reality of death have been brought into sharp focus during the Covid-19 pandemic. In Ireland alone, more than 8,000 people have died with Covid-19. Each of these lives is precious and every life matters. With a most amazing spirit of solidarity, the energies of our society - in hospitals, test centres, vaccination clinics, schools, churches, supermarkets and in so many other places - have been directed towards protecting those who were most vulnerable to disease. We have begun to see the fruits of those efforts. While all of this was going on, the Oireachtas was being asked to discuss legislation to provide for assisted suicide. That particular piece of legislation, thank God, has been rejected by the Oireachtas Committee for Justice on the grounds that it was deeply flawed. The surprising and disappointing thing is that the Oireachtas Committee did not reject the principle of Assisted Suicide and has proposed that Assisted Suicide be discussed further by a special committee, which would report within a specified timeframe.

Compassion is often presented as a justification for assisted suicide, but having compassion means “suffering with” someone. Assisted suicide reflects a failure of compassion on the part of society. It is a failure to respond to the challenge of caring for people who are terminally ill, or who have disabilities or dementia, as they approach the end of their lives. Those who assist with a suicide, whatever their motives, co-operate with the self-destruction of another person. It is one thing when life is allowed to take its natural course, with appropriate management of pain and stress, but is not artificially prolonged by burdensome treatment. It is something else entirely, when one person actively and deliberately participates in ending the life of another.

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Monday, 4th October. St. Francis of Assisi
8.00am: The Holy Souls in Purgatory
10.00am: Mary Henry (1st A)

Tuesday, 5th October.
8.00am: John Ward (A)
10.00am: Sr. Thomasina and Sr. Mary Brigid Gilfillan (A)

Wednesday, 6th October. St. Bruno.
8.00am: Eddie and Kevin O'Reilly and deceased family members
10.00am: Helena and John Orackovi and DFM & deceased children

Thursday, 7th October. Our Lady of the Rosary.
8.00am: Patrick Mulderry (A)
10.00am: Gabriel Keegan (A)

Friday, 8th October. Children's Day of Mission Prayer
8.00am: Rose Murray and deceased family members
10.00am: Bernard McGlynn and deceased family members

Saturday, 9th October. St. John Henry Newman.
8.00am: Ellen and Tom Egan and deceased family members
10.00am: P.O. Johnson (A)

Sunday, 10th October. 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time
6.00pm (Vigil): Martin Lowry (A)
7.30pm (Vigil): Teresa and Joseph Hackett and deceased family members
8.00am: Agnes and Patrick Walsh (A)
10.00am: Margaret Clabby (1st A)
11.30am: Shared: Tony Gilchrist (Month's Mind); Pat Stenson (1st A)
Patricia, Seán and John Farrelly (A)
1.00pm: Vera Gallagher (A) 6.00pm Joan Ryan (A)

OFFERTORY COLLECTION: We thank each one of you most sincerely for your continued generous contributions to our weekly collections. The amount received in the Offertory Collection last week was **€3,740.00**

HARVEST DUES: We thank you for your contribution which amounted to €18,005.00. Your generosity is greatly appreciated.

BAPTISM: With joy, we recently welcomed Oisín Michael Redahan, Ava Leigh Cosgrave-Kelly, Ciara Lena McKenna Carrig and Priscilla Rose Lawrence into the Christian Community.

REST IN PEACE: Your prayers are requested for the happy repose of the souls of Nan Drumm, Teffia Park, whose funeral took place during the week. Also Eileen Dolan (née O'Connor), White Linen Woods, whose funeral takes place on Monday at 11am, burial afterwards in Ballymacormack Cemetery.

CONFIRMATION: This week we conclude the celebration of *Confirmation* with St. Eimear's N.S. Tuesday 5th Oct at 6pm. *The ceremony will be limited to the Confirmation candidate and 3 adults.*

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION: The remaining schools to receive their First Holy Communion from the Table of The Lord, are as follows:
Sat 9th Oct at 11am, Melview N.S. Sat 9th Oct at 2pm, Gaelscoil. Ceremonies will be limited to the Holy Communion child, their parents and siblings.

BLESSING OF ANIMALS: To celebrate the feast of St Francis of Assisi we will have a blessing of all animals on the plaza of the Cathedral on Sun 3rd Oct at 3pm.

Gospel Mark 10:2-16 - What God has united, man must not divide

Some Pharisees approached Jesus and asked, 'Is it against the law for a man to divorce his wife?' They were testing him. He answered them, 'What did Moses command you?' 'Moses allowed us' they said 'to draw up a writ of dismissal and so to divorce.' Then Jesus said to them, 'It was because you were so unteachable that he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. This is why a man must leave father and mother, and the two become one body. They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide.' Back in the house the disciples questioned him again about this, and he said to them, 'The man who divorces his wife and marries another is guilty of adultery against her. And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another she is guilty of adultery too.'

People were bringing little children to him, for him to touch them. The disciples turned them away, but when Jesus saw this he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' Then he put his arms round them, laid his hands on them and gave them his blessing.