Jews, Christians, and Muslims: No to Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

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Abrahamic religions: no to euthanasia, assisted suicide, yes to palliative care

Representatives of the Abrahamic monotheistic religions condemn euthanasia and assisted suicide, and encourage palliative care everywhere and for everyone

“We oppose any form of euthanasia – that is the direct, deliberate and intentional act of taking life – as well as physician-assisted suicide – that is the direct, deliberate and intentional support of committing suicide – because they fundamentally contradict the inalienable value of human life, and therefore are inherently and consequentially morally and religiously wrong, and should be forbidden without exceptions.”

Representatives of the Abrahamic religions made the statement in a position paper that they signed and released in the Vatican on Monday regarding end-of-life issues, such as euthanasia, assisted suicide and palliative care.

The term, Abrahamic monotheistic religions, derives from the Old Testament biblical figure Abraham who is recognized by Jews, Christians, Muslims and others.

Euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide - morally and religiously wrong

They categorically condemned any pressure upon dying patients to end their lives by active and deliberate actions.

They wrote, “Care for the dying, is both part of our stewardship of the Divine gift of life when a cure is no longer possible, as well as our human and ethical responsibility toward the dying (and often) suffering patient.”

“Holistic and respectful care of the person,” they said, “must recognize the uniquely human, spiritual and religious dimension of dying as a fundamental objective.”

The person behind the declaration is Rabbi Avraham Steinberg of Israel who proposed the idea to Pope Francis, who in turn entrusted it to the Vatican’s Pontifical Academy for Life. Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, the president of the Academy, involved and coordinated a mixed inter-faith group to draft the declaration.

After the release of the position paper, the 30 signatories were received in audience by Pope Francis in the Vatican. Among them were some cardinals, rabbis, including David Rosen and Syamsul Anwar of Indonesia’s second-largest Islamic organization, Muhammadiyah.

Palliative care for all

The Abrahamic religions encouraged and expressed support for qualified palliative care everywhere and for everyone. “Even when efforts to continue staving off death seems unreasonably burdensome,” they wrote, “we are morally and religiously duty-bound to provide

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comfort, effective pain and symptoms relief, companionship, care and spiritual assistance to the dying patient and to her/his family.”

While calling for laws and policies that protect the rights and the dignity of the dying patient to avoid euthanasia and promote palliative care, they committed themselves to involve other religions and all people of goodwill.

Archbishop Paglia stressed the importance of the ecumenical and interreligious dimension of the joint initiative. He said it allowed them to discover areas of convergence and bring fruits of communion in order to render a service to all people in whom "we all see sons and daughters of God".

Source: Vatican News

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