



## Diocese of Rockford

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Office of the Bishop

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Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I take this opportunity to write to inform you about two identical pieces of legislation that will legalize assisted suicide in Illinois, Senate Bill 9 (SB) and House Bill 1328 (HB 1328).

Assisted suicide makes it legal for a physician to prescribe an array of lethal drugs to a person diagnosed with a terminal disease who requests to end his or her life.

Proponents of this legislation argue that this legislation will end suffering at the end of life. Our Catholic faith strongly believes that no one should needlessly suffer or have to watch a loved one experience unnecessary pain and suffering. Our hospitals, and indeed our whole history of Catholic health care give witness to our compassion for those who are suffering, and for their loved ones. In this way we show our love and respect for the gift of human life and the dignity even of those who are ill or suffering.

Fortunately, as medical knowledge has advanced, there are now effective ways to make a person more comfortable at the end of life through palliative care. This relatively new specialty utilizes physician-led teams to care for the whole person – physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually – to relieve the symptoms and the stress that often accompany serious illness and side effects of treatment.

Even if it is well intended, assisted suicide is a false charity. It brings with it many alarming consequences that, as followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to reject. For example, in states with legalized suicide, there are documented cases of insurance companies refusing to pay for the necessary care of the terminally ill while at the same time they will cover the small cost of the drugs resulting in the end of life. Every major national organization that represents people with disabilities is opposed to assisted suicide. Experience shows that it is especially the poor and those with disabilities who are particularly in jeopardy as they are the most vulnerable to such abuses. There is no way to prevent the vulnerable from being coerced or intimidated to end their lives once this assisted suicide is legal.

The American Medical Association (AMA) has summed up the case against assisted suicide well: “Physician assisted suicide is fundamentally incompatible with the physician’s role as healer, would be difficult or impossible to control, and would provide serious societal risks.”

Assisted suicide is clearly not the compassionate solution for those who are suffering. Through palliative care, expanded access to mental health care, and stronger family and community support, providers and families are finding better ways to accompany these people compassionately that truly confers the love for, and dignity of, each human life.

Please consider offering your prayers and fasting to help stop this. In addition, take action by writing, calling or e-mailing your state elected officials to vote “NO” on this legislation. For further information go to [www.ilcatholic.org](http://www.ilcatholic.org) or call 217-528-9200. to find out how to contact your local elected official to tell them to vote NO on SB 9 and HB 1328.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend David J. Malloy  
Bishop of Rockford