

# Vatican strongly condemns euthanasia, calling it an 'act of homicide'

By Delia Gallagher, Livia Borghese and Amy Woodyatt,  
CNN

Updated 1635 GMT (0035 HKT) September 22, 2020



The Vatican condemned the practice in a 17-page document released Tuesday.

**Rome (CNN)** The [Vatican](#) has condemned euthanasia in its strongest language yet, calling it an "act of homicide" that can never be justified, in a document issued Tuesday.

The 17-page document, published by the Vatican's doctrinal office and titled "The Good Samaritan," reaffirms the Catholic Church's prohibitions on euthanasia and assisted suicide -- just as some traditionally Catholic countries are considering laws to legalize them.

In the document, euthanasia is described as a "crime against human life," and an "intrinsically evil act in every situation and circumstance."

Its authors say those who approve laws in favor of euthanasia and assisted suicide are "accomplices of a grave sin that others will execute."



Facebook stops French man streaming his dying days

Euthanasia involves a physician administering a drug to end the life of a patient, who is suffering, while assisted suicide allows the patient to administer his or her own lethal drug, usually with a doctor's supervision.

Some form of assistance with dying is currently legal in nine US states and Washington DC, and euthanasia is legal in three European countries: The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. Spain and Portugal, traditionally Catholic countries, are currently considering laws that would make euthanasia legal.

The Catholic Church opposes assisted suicide as a violation of divine law, and leading figures have consistently spoken out against the practice.

"There may be a legitimate diversity of opinion even among Catholics about waging war and applying the death penalty, but not however with regard to abortion and euthanasia," [Pope Benedict wrote](#) in 2004 when he was still a cardinal.

Pope Francis -- who succeeded Pope Benedict in 2013 -- has previously condemned assisted suicide and euthanasia and **asked doctors** to "reject the temptation" to facilitate the procedures.

Tuesday's release of "The Good Samaritan" encourages health care workers and families to accompany a terminally ill patient in his/her suffering and blames a culture which values "autonomy and individualism" over community for allowing and assisting terminally ill patients to end their lives. To participate in euthanasia, the document says, "is to take the place of God in deciding the moment of death."

*Delia Gallagher and Livia Borghese reported from Rome. Amy Woodyatt wrote from London.*