

**The Governor's Announcement**  
**Fr. Jeffrey S. Tunncliff**  
**December 20, 2025.**

It was only last Tuesday when I wrote [“A Christian Response”](#) where I said I cried when I learned of two unrelated mass shooting and the shooting of U.S. and Syrian forces. The next day we learned that Governor Hochul had decided to sign the assisted suicide bill passed by the New York State Assembly and Senate earlier this year. Before she signs it, she has requested the Assembly and State Senate pass some amendments the bill to increase the “guardrails” against abuse and/or the possibility of someone being forced to engage in what they term “medical aid in dying.”

“Medical aid in dying.” The term sends shivers through me. Medical aid is designed in its very nature to care for lives, not end them. Therefore, I cannot, in good consciousness, call it “medical aid in dying”. I will use the common term that signifies what it is, assisted suicide.

I personally learned of Governor Hochul's decision through a post on the [Facebook page of the New York State Catholic Conference](#) sharing [the one page response of the Catholic Bishops in New York State](#). It is a very good statement. I encourage you to read it for yourself.

One might think that Governor Hochul would have announced her decision through an official press release or press conference. She did not. It was announced through an [op-ed article](#) she wrote that appeared in the Times Union Newspaper.

Once again I found myself wanting to cry but this time, instead of crying, I found myself getting angry. Is anyone listening to what our Catholic faith says against assisted suicide? The good news is that some people have listened. I thank everyone who took the time this year to contact their state assembly representative, their state senator, and the governor. The bad news is that Governor Hochul did not follow our request for her to veto the bill.

In her [op-ed article](#), she spoke of compassion for the suffering. If you want to know how I look at suffering, please read my article, [“Finding Value in Suffering.”](#) If you want to know directly from our Catholic Church what our faith teaches about suffering you can read Pope St. John Paul II's Apostolic Letter [“Salvifici Doloris”](#).

Governor Hochul spoke of how New York State has a long history of supporting the rights of individuals. Many people speak of freedom. God gives us free will. What choices do you make with your free will. What should we do with our freedom?

Again, thinking of our freedom, I turn to Pope St. John Paul II. This time I quote from his homily at Camden Yards.

Every generation of Americans needs to know that freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought. (“Homily of his holiness John Paul II” during his Apostolic Journey to America. Oriole Park at Camden Yards, Baltimore. October 8, 1995. [https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1995/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_hom\\_19951008\\_baltimore.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1995/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19951008_baltimore.html), 7.)

In [their statement](#), the NYS Catholic Bishops write

This new law signals our government's abandonment of its most vulnerable citizens, telling people who are sick or disabled that suicide in their case is not only acceptable, but is encouraged by our elected leaders.

In her [op-ed article](#), Governor Hochul speaks of the additional "guardrails" she is requiring before signing the bill. If one is in favor of assisted suicide, her "guardrails" may seem very good to make sure that no one is forcing a person to kill themselves. When one realizes that assisted suicide is morally wrong as a violation of the Fifth Commandment, *you shall not kill*, one should also realize that the guardrails do nothing to change the immorality of assisted suicide.

Throughout this year, I heard multiple sources speak of Governor Hochul's past support of policies to help prevent suicide. If she is against general suicide, I wonder how she came to support assisted suicide.

When I heard one of the guardrails she is requiring to be added is a video recording of a person's expressed desire that they are requested assisted suicide, I could not help but think of the fake videos available on the internet that seem to show people saying things they never said. The surest way to make sure assisted suicide is never used against a person's will is to never allow it.

In her [op-ed article](#), Governor Hochul also spoke of being at a Catholic funeral Mass. There she reflected on the compassion of God to not what people to suffer. Yes, God is compassionate but I cannot help but think of the times when Jesus tells us to take up our crosses. To take up our crosses is to accept our sufferings.

I also think of [Ecclesiastes 3:1-8](#) where it says, "*There is an appointed time for everything...a time to die.*" It is not for us to choose when it is our *time to die*. If we trust in the Lord as *the way and the truth and the life*, we leave it to God to choose when our lives end ([see John 14:6](#))

When I think of compassion and a desire to keep our loved ones from suffering, I do not think of killing them. I think of palliative care to manage their pain. I think of comfort care homes where the dying person is accompanied in their final days by the volunteers along with any family who sit at their bedside.

It is hard for me to accept that it seems almost certain that assisted suicide will soon be legal in New York State. It leaves me with a broken heart struggling to find peace. This leads me to think of the Serenity Prayer. Many people are familiar with the first four lines. There is more.

The Serenity Prayer  
by Reinhold Neibuhr

God grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change;  
courage to change the things I can;

and wisdom to know the difference.  
Living one day at a time;  
enjoying one moment at a time;  
accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;  
taking, as He did, this sinful world  
as it is, not as I would have it;  
trusting that He will make all things right  
if I surrender to His Will;  
that I may be reasonably happy in this life  
and supremely happy with Him  
forever in the next.  
Amen.

There are things I cannot change. I ask for the grace to accept that. However, this does not mean I am supposed to give up. I ask for the grace to endure the hardships that come my way when I follow Jesus.

When I first heard that Governor Hochul had decided to sign the assisted suicide bill, I thought of all the things I could write against assisted suicide. I wanted to put them all in a new article. I wanted to send all the reasons against assisted suicide. As the Holy Spirit urged me towards patience, I realized that I do not need to write everything about assisted suicide now. I have already written a lot about it. Instead of repeating it all here, I think the Holy Spirit is telling me just to give you links to what I have previously written about assisted suicide.

What I have written:

- I begin with the article, [“A Call to Action”](#), I wrote in June when the New York State Senate passed the assisted suicide bill.
- You can find all the blog articles I have written on assisted suicide at <https://renewaloffaith.org/category/pro-life-end-of-life/>.
- You can find a series of videos, [Treating Life with Dignity and Love](#), I did on Catholic ProLife teaching at <https://renewaloffaith.org/treating-life-with-dignity-and-love/>. [Part III](#) focuses on assisted suicide (AKA Euthanasia).
- In November two parishioners and I, with assistance from some of my friends, created a [“Novena for the Protection and Care at End of Life”](#). We made it available to our parishioners and to others. We prayed it after our daily Masses. Maybe you should pray it now.

In my articles above, there are numerous references to church documents on life. The one that is most relevant here is the 2020 document from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith [“Samaritanus Bonus”](#) on the care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life. July 14, 2020.

I want to fix this. I want to help every single person in the world understand why assisted suicide is wrong but I know I cannot save the whole world. That’s a job for Jesus.

We are about to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ at Christmas. It is good for us to celebrate his birth. It is God who gives us life. God gives us physical life and He offers eternal life to those who follow him.

Life is a gift. We must never forget this. We face a *culture of death*. God wants us to build a *culture of life* (see my article, [“Towards a Culture of Life”](#)).

As Governor Hochul prepares to sign the assisted suicide bill after the state legislature passes her guardrail amendments, our work is not done. It is not time to give up. We must do what we can to help people understand why assisted suicide is wrong. In their statement, the NYS Catholic Bishops [“NYS Bishops’ Statement on Gov. Hochul’s Plan to Sign Assisted Suicide Bill”](#) write

We call on Catholics and all New Yorkers to reject physician-assisted suicide for themselves, their loved ones, and those in their care. And we pray that our state turn away from its promotion of a Culture of Death and invest instead in life-affirming, compassionate hospice and palliative care, which is seriously underutilized.

I also think of palliative care and comfort care homes. Perhaps it is time to help others know how palliative care can address their pain. It seems it is time to increase our advocacy efforts for our state to support palliative care and comfort care homes. Individually, perhaps God is calling some of you to volunteer some time at a comfort care home or to offer some financial support (please make sure it does not condone assisted suicide before giving your support).

What is most needed by people who are dying is hope. That is exactly what God offers us, hope. Knowing that Jesus Christ died for our sins that we might know eternal life is the source of our hope. This hope changes the way we look at suffering and death. It is Jesus’ own suffering that won our salvation. We ask God for the grace we need to persevere.