

# Living Wills Kill—Don't Sign Them

By Daniel P. McGivern

Many people today do everything they can to avoid pain and suffering. They see no value in it.

Yet, most Americans are Christians and see the value in the pain and suffering related to the death of Jesus Christ. This the spotless Lamb offered for the sins of mankind.

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*If you love me, keep my commandments....  
But if you will enter life, keep the  
commandments.... You shall not kill.*

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If one chooses to follow Christ, he must also do as Christ says: "If you love me, keep my commandments." Jesus also said, "But if you will enter life, keep the commandments." One of the commandments forbids murder. "You shall not kill."

Living wills are written declarations authorizing others – attorneys, physicians and even family members – to kill you, to legally murder you, by removing food, water or normal life-sustaining machines. This is commonly called "mercy killing." But it is killing just the same, a grave violation of the laws of God if you made a living will authorizing this to be done.

If you sign a living will, you are responsible to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ, who judges all men. How do you reconcile a living will with loving and obeying Christ and His commandments?

Every believer knows the final destination of every soul is heaven or hell. We sentence ourselves to hell, by knowingly, willingly and deliberately choosing things that are contrary to the commandments, and refusing to repent and be reconciled with Christ.

## **Embrace Suffering**

Suffering has been embraced, longed for and desired by many saints. St. Therese of Lisieux, one of the greatest of modern saints, said, "I felt the dawning in my heart of a great desire for suffering. At the same time, Jesus seemed to assure me that He had reserved a great many crosses for me."

Too many people today want to run away from crosses, suffering and pain. All suffering, all trials, whatever their nature or origin, are a part of His plan for our souls, and serve as purification for past sins and misdeeds.

Our holy faith teaches us to offer up our sufferings for our sins, the conversion of sinners, for the souls in purgatory. We need always to remember that God's providence includes

His providential timing. He knows how long we will live and when we will die. God will take a person at the very moment He wants, when that soul is ready; when they have been striving to live His will daily. I've seen this happen twice – my wife and my first great-grandson.

In the case of my wife, she died slowly and painfully from cancer. She walked the hallway many days and nights, praying the Rosary. On the night she died, there had been no indication she would die that night. Yes, she was suffering. But she suffered many days and nights. She received Holy Communion that day in her sick bed. At night, listening to her suffering, the thought came to my mind, "Lord, if it is Your will, take her." Two seconds later, totally unexpected, my mother exclaimed that my wife had stopped breathing. God's timing was perfect. He had prepared me also to accept His will.

When my first great-grandson was born, he had many problems. He bled profusely and was kept on a machine for breathing. Surgery was required. In the rush from one hospital to another, an arrangement was made to have the baby baptized on arrival. With prayer, he made it to the second hospital and was baptized. After surgery, the doctors wanted to disconnect everything, saying, "It will end all suffering." Fortunately, my granddaughter asked me what she should do.

My answer was simple. "Leave everything hooked up. Let God decide. Give the baby every chance to live. Don't put it on your conscience that you decided when your baby should die." It would be killing the baby to disconnect everything. The baby died a few days later, at the age of ten days with every machine available trying to keep him alive.

Two wonderful things happened: the first was a miracle most people would not believe, but was proof that the baby was indeed in heaven. My daughter and granddaughter were talking about the baby after he died. My granddaughter broke down in tears as she spoke. Suddenly, both were consoled with the pleasant perfume of the baby. A very distinct and beautiful perfume was smelled, coming, they felt, from heaven.

The second thing that happened was the entire bill, amounting to over \$100,000, for 10 days of fighting for life, was all covered by only one month's premium paid on a brand new medical plan on the baby. Everything had been done in accordance with God's will and He removed all the financial burdens which would otherwise have been a disaster.

Suffering? Yes. The baby and my wife both suffered greatly. Both were taken in God's good time. No man decided when they should die.

### **Allow God to Choose**

When a person signs a living will, he or she is not willing to allow God to choose His own good time. Furthermore, if the living will determines life or death, they are in effect killing themselves and breaking God's commandment. They are trying to avoid suffering and expense. But what about the next life, and the further guilt of having another person kill you because of signing a living will?

Never, ever make a living will. If you have done so, rescind it. Let it be known that your wish is to let God decide when you die – not a doctor, hospital or lawyer.

Live according to God's commandments. Living wills are just one more trick of the devil in

the modern world.

Remember, Christ's love exists every day in a world starving for love; His word proclaimed to the hopeless, giving them hope, and to the suffering and dying, giving them comfort to the end. Sometimes, the patient will miraculously recover, which can never happen if someone has already pulled the plug. Even Jesus' death on the

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*He bowed His head and  
gave up the spirit (John 19:30).*

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Cross was according to the exact moment ordained by God the Father. Prior to the first Good Friday, attempts on His life came to naught "for his hour had not yet come." When it came, "He bowed His head and gave up the spirit" (John 19:30).

My special thanks to Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J., the eminent moral theologian, world-famous author and Vatican advisor for his help in advising me for this 1991 article.

P.S. We now use Hawaii Protective Medical Decisions Document. You can obtain one for your state for a suggested donation of \$8.50 from 740-282-3810 or [www.patientsrightscouncil.org](http://www.patientsrightscouncil.org). It would also be helpful for those in other countries to use as a guide.