Euthanasia Pro+Con+Catholic View Essay, Research Paper

Some have suggested that we legalize physician-assisted suicide in California. They argue that we should find death before it finds us, and that the right to die is the right-to-choose. They are supporting such an initiative because they fear that they will have to endure horrible pain and live out a life encompassed by absolute suffering. By being able to end the torment, preferably legally, perhaps they can even relieve their families of some economic pressures. By legalizing “active” Euthanasia, the inducement of gentle death solely by means without which life would continue naturally, advocators of Euthanasia hope to save terminally-ill patients from a painful death and rather, allow dying patients to go on to the next life in peace.

Those who endorse Euthanasia do so because they believe that to end a patient’s suffering through such “mercy killing” is compassionate and as the name implies, a final act of mercy and love. It would save patients’ family members the agony of having to watch a loved one die in unbearable pain. Furthermore, the principle of autonomy suggests that anyone who wishes to die should be allowed to, especially if this is his or her final wish. Advocators of Euthanasia believe that a person should be allowed to die in a painless, peaceful, and dignified way.

Yet, those against Euthanasia say that Euthanasia is not mercy killing, but actually murder. They argue that God is the ultimate physician who decides the fate of one’s life, and that we, human beings, have to right to decided whether someone lives or dies. Moreover, if that right were turned over to a physician, how can we be sure that the death of a patient is so imminent? Instead, physicians could just prolong life by the principle of double effect; for example, by increasing dosages of Morphine to relieve pain, while also possible increasing the chance of death. Ultimately, those against Euthanasia fear that legalizing Euthanasia will cause a slippery slope for legal murder. If we allow doctors to kill patients, what will happen next? Where do we draw the line?

The Catholic Church supports those who are against Euthanasia. The Church believes that giving a patient medication that will have the double effect of relieving pain and possibly speeding up death is morally acceptable, since the ultimate motive is not death, but rather, alleviating pain. However, if one were to attend to a patient and increased the dosage of medication with the purpose of ending the patient’s life, then the Catholic Church would consider such an act as murder. The belief is that everything happens for a reason, and the decision of one’s life or death is not ours, but God’s; by trying to control life or death, we would be interfering with God’s will. God would not give us anything that we could not handle; so we must let life run its entire course to the very end.

Personally, I believe that the right to die with dignity is a personal choice that needs to be not taken lightly and should be well-thought out. Euthanasia affects not only the person

who dies, but other family, friends and those doctors or individuals who help make that

decision. This decision is not for everyone. However, those who are facing an uncertain

shortened future should be allowed to make this decision for themselves. Many

safeguards need to be in place and legislation needs to be introduced to address this issue.

It is a decision that no one ever hopes to have to make, but by ignoring it, it will not go

away. I think we should legalize Euthanasia.