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“And Jesus said: Thou shalt do no murder...” – Matthew 19:18

February 11, 2023
Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes

Dear Devote of Our Lady,

The season of Lent is the ideal time to contemplate one’s death. Death is the separation of the soul from the body. When we die, our soul comes immediately before Our Lord for its particular judgment, while our lifeless body is buried in the earth. Our soul and body will be reunited at the end of time, when Our Lord comes again to pronounce the General Judgment on the living and the dead.

We cannot know with certainty the moment of a person’s death. The Church allows priests to administer Sacraments to a person up to several hours after apparent death. As death approaches, the body may so weaken that it cannot demonstrate the soul’s presence. As long as the soul is still present, however, life has not ended. **God’s sacred gift of life is precious from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death.**

So teaches our glorious Catholic Faith. We believe these things because God has revealed them and He can neither deceive nor be deceived. The devil, on the other hand, has been a liar and a murderer from the beginning (Jn. 8:44). In our time, he has conspired with the medical establishment to confuse and ensnare us on the issue of death.

Formerly, doctors determined death had occurred once a person’s vital functions ceased (e.g., breathing, heartbeat, circulation), shortly followed by more overt signs (e.g., sharp drop in temperature, discoloration, rigor mortis and putrefaction). Beginning in 1968, however, the term ‘brain death’ was introduced in medical practice. Doctors now say someone is dead when their brain function ceases ‘irreversibly.’

Protocols for determining ‘brain death’ can be unreliable. In fact, on multiple occasions ‘brain death’ has been applied to living persons! In 2020, for example, a 36-year-old West Virginian man was declared brain dead after an accident. As doctors prepared to harvest his organs for transplant, he swung his arm. The next day he opened his eyes. He subsequently made a sound recovery. Persons declared brain dead have grown hair and fingernails and reacted to pain. Pregnant women labeled ‘brain dead’ have even delivered a live baby!

The “brain dead” diagnosis is essential for organ transplantation. Vital organs cannot be harvested from a cadaver *but must be extracted from a living body*. The medical establishment says that the person is dead and that their body is being kept alive by life support machines and interventions. The point remains, however: These are living patients. **Life support machines cannot bring dead bodies back to life. They can only help living bodies stay alive.**

As a result, current medical practice runs up against authentic Catholic teaching, which permits the extraction of an organ from a person who can rely on the pair of the same organ to continue living (e.g. a lung or a kidney). By harvesting a vital organ like a heart or a liver from a living patient, doctors *kill* the patient. In a heart transplant, for example, a beating heart is taken from a living person who dies as a result. “Brain death” is not true death but a legal fiction created to make possible the multi-billion dollar organ transplant industry.

The increasing popularity of medically assisted suicide has further devalued human life. In 2021, more than 10,000 Canadians chose to die at the hands of their doctor. Some had their organs harvested, which a Canadian television news report called a “win-win”. Hospitals increasingly hasten the death of those whose “quality of life” they consider irredeemable by withholding nutrition and hydration.

What can we do to protect ourselves and our loved ones in these dark times while living the teaching of our Catholic Faith on the sanctity of human life? We recommend five important steps:

First, make a legally binding living will or power of attorney for personal care, and designate in writing your primary and secondary health-care proxies. By doing so, you make clear your wishes concerning emergency and end-of-life care in a way that will be difficult for any health-care provider to ignore. Such a document is critical because some states and provinces have laws that presume you consent to be an organ donor unless you explicitly refuse in writing.

Second, educate yourself, your loved ones, and your health care proxies about the murderous protocols that are now standard in hospitals. Make sure they know that while doctors need not use extraordinary means to preserve life, intravenous nutrition and hydration are not extraordinary means. Dr. Paul Byrne, who spoke at The Fatima Center's 2013 Path to Peace Conference, warned against the withdrawal of oxygen in an apnea test:

“This test, which has no benefit for the comatose patient and, in fact, aggravates the patient's condition, is done without the knowledge or consent of family members. The apnea test, during which the ventilator is turned off for up to 10 minutes, can induce ‘brain death’ or cardiac arrest. Its sole purpose is to determine the patient's inability to breathe on his own in order to declare ‘brain death.’”

Third, make sure your driver's license does not indicate your consent to organ donation.

Fourth, tell your loved ones the truth about “brain death” and organ transplantation so they can make appropriate decisions for themselves.

Fifth, fill out and carry with you at all times the enclosed Medical Card. This card tells emergency medical personnel: 1) To summon a priest if you are in danger of death; 2) To provide treatment and care that preserves your life and does not hasten your death; 3) Not to remove your vital organs; and 4) Not to remove your Brown Scapular, which Our Lady promised will ensure your salvation if you die wearing it. We enclose an additional card, which you can cut out and attach to the Medical Card. When completed, it provides information about who should be contacted in the event of a medical emergency.

Our beautiful and unique Medical Card makes clear your devotion to Our Lady of Fatima and the Catholic Faith. Carrying the card in your purse or wallet may result in your leaving this world with the assistance of a priest and the Sacraments. What could be more important? Use the enclosed Reply form to order additional cards for your loved ones.

As Catholics, let us live our Faith right up to end of our natural life. In so doing, we will be witnesses of Our Blessed Lord, Who triumphed over death at Easter.

David Rodríguez
Content Director for The Fatima Center

P.S. Do not be deceived. “Brain Death” is not true death. By taking vital organs for transplantation, doctors kill their patient. Let us take all reasonable means to ensure we do not become victims of the culture of death that surrounds us. Obtain a legal living will or power of attorney for personal care, designate health care proxies, and complete and carry with you the enclosed Medical Card so that a priest will be summoned for you in an emergency. Use the enclosed Reply form to order more cards for your loved ones. You may be giving them the gift of eternal life!

P.P.S. For further information about the issues covered above, please watch Dr. Paul Byrne's talk “Killing for Organs” on our website www.fatima.org and see his website www.lifeguardianfoundation.org