

November 1991

## From the Editor's Desk: The Gift of Life, Slavery and Euthanasia

John P. Mullooly

Follow this and additional works at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq>

---

### Recommended Citation

Mullooly, John P. (1991) "From the Editor's Desk: The Gift of Life, Slavery and Euthanasia," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 58: No. 4, Article 3.

Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol58/iss4/3>

## From the Editor's Desk



### *The Gift of Life, Slavery and Euthanasia*

Life is a gift. It is nothing we are entitled to; it cannot be earned; it cannot be given away; it cannot be disposed of by ourselves. A human being receives it and is given stewardship over it. We are not our own but belong to our creator who is the lord of life. In giving human beings the gift of life, human beings are given freedom to live that life with the inherent dignity and sacredness with which that life is endowed.

The history of the world illustrates how human beings enslave other human beings. This tragic history dating back to ancient times is replete with illustrations of slavery, whether it be of the Jews by the Egyptians or Babylonians; plantation owners of the south; or the Germans or Soviets over their conquered population.

The innate enslavement of a human being is always imposed by other human beings and is illustrative of what occurs with euthanasia or assisted suicide. A human being who turns his life over to another human being to be killed is actually enslaving himself to that person. No one can enslave himself to another as it is completely contrary to the freedom with which an individual is endowed by his creator. Furthermore, an individual has only stewardship over his life. He has no right to kill himself nor have himself killed. He is not his own, but God's.

Those misguided advocates of euthanasia appeal to the principle of autonomy to justify their position. The principle of autonomy has its limits and does not extend itself to a person enslaving himself to another as is the

case with euthanasia and assisted suicide. The secondary argument of relief from pain and suffering likewise is found wanting for the same reason. Pain and suffering is not relieved by enslavement to another. Pain and suffering is relieved by appropriate medical, spiritual, and human means.

The consequences of euthanasia as with slavery are apparent for all to see. Once society embraces euthanasia, the innate freedom of individuals will suffer and other abuses will follow. Countries will no longer uphold the individual and will treat him as a servant or slave. At present the dignity of individual life is upheld in the rights of man by constitutional guarantees in every democratic society. When human life guarantees are removed by the state "lives unworthy to be lived" will be disposed of much as they were by the medical professionals in Germany in the 1920's. How this movement initiated by the medical profession spread to include all classes to the point of genocide is well known.

The modern euthanasia practice in the Netherlands should give us pause here in the U.S.A. as to how rapidly the abuses follow upon permissive voluntary euthanasia. Involuntary euthanasia follows closely in its wake. With medical care so expensive, with increasing pressure upon society to fund medical care, one can see how pressure will be put upon people to consider euthanasia as a duty. What an inversion of the proper order of life!

As God is the creator of life, it belongs to Him. We only have stewardship over life and our stewardship does not extend toward terminating life.

Society's obligation toward life is to conform to the proper order and in conformity with the dignity and sacredness of each member's life. It has no right to permit the enslavement of an individual. Rather, it must uphold that individual's freedom as created, adopted son of God.

**— J. P. Mullooly**  
**Editor**

---