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## Murder by Any Other Name .. (An Editorial)

Catholic Physicians' Guilds

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## **An Editorial:**

### **Murder by Any Other Name . . .**

On December 4, the professional integrity and traditional reputation of the medical profession was placed in jeopardy. Tragically, this was done by a member of the profession itself. On this date Dr. Hermann Sander not only deliberately took means to shorten the life of a patient entrusted to his care, but by his subsequent actions challenged and placed in issue the profession's sacred tradition of guarding and protecting life at any cost.

As Catholics and Christians we unequivocally condemn this as murder. God is the author of life and God alone can terminate life. We regret pain and suffering as much as any other group, but we realize that it can be used to perfect a soul in the eyes of God and to gain merit for eternity. If a merciful God can permit suffering in human beings we cannot question it or use illicit means to escape it. This same sentiment was repeated in the statement of Dr. George F. Lull, Secretary and General Manager of the American Medical Association: "We have no sympathy with the euthanasia movement. The average doctor believes it amoral. There are times when death seems inevitable, but we, as doctors, can only hope for a quiet, painless death. We cannot hasten it. That right is given only to God."

From a purely scientific point of view so-called mercy killing is dangerous and retrogressive. It has been the glorious ambition of the medical profession to continue working for the cure of all diseases. It is the hope of progressive medical men that many incurable diseases will at a later date become curable. The deadliness of certain diseases, their ravages, and the untold suffering they bring have spurred brilliant and humane medical men to long and even heroic tasks of research. It is practically sacrilegious for another member of that same profession to surrender weakly to a pseudo-humane impulse and become a defeatist in the fight against "incurable" diseases.

The act of Dr. Sander was a traitorous act to his noble profession. It was one which tends to undermine the confidence of the American people in the medical profession. Confidence in one's physician is a necessary condition in the cure of any patient. How can patients have confidence in doctors who advocate mercy killing? The practice of mercy killing would remove all restraint and control over the unscrupulous, the incompetent and the criminally minded doctor.