

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the last two weeks I wrote about some end of life issues. There are a few other things we should consider:

- **End of life health care:** The Church forbids euthanasia. The end of our earthly life comes when God decides to take us. We may not choose to end our own lives or the lives of our loved ones with any direct action with the intention of ending life. However, it is licit to use medication to alleviate pain, and if the secondary effect is the shortening of life it is acceptable. The pain relief, however, cannot be used intentionally to end the life. In addition, when the person is suffering from a terminal illness we are not obliged to undertake heroic measures to maintain life at all costs. Heroic measures are those which may sustain life, but only at great cost, further pain, suffering and humiliation. If you or your family have questions about these issues you may ask the clergy for counsel and advice.
- **End of life material concerns:** Each one of us should be aware of the shortness of life and make plans for the disposal or dispersion of our material goods. It is not morbid to discuss these matters with your family, your attorney and your spouse. When making your will, you should remember the surviving with charity and generosity, not forgetting the church and the Lord's work. Your will should also include funeral plans.
- **Living wills:** a living will assigns an executor should you lose control mentally or physically. In the living will you can state your health care wishes, your wishes about the end of life and terminal medical care.
- **Funeral plans:** With the increasing popularity of cremation the options for funeral services, burials and internment are increasing. Deacon Bannio plans funerals at OLR and he can answer your questions about funerals. The best option for a Catholic is to have a funeral Mass in church, but there are other options depending on circumstances.
- **Burial:** The principle for Catholic burials is that the mortal remains must be treated with respect and dignity. Cremated remains are not to be retained in a cupboard or on the mantelpiece or turned into jewelry or framed as a memento. Nor are they to be scattered or buried in the ground. They must be retained in an inviolable container and buried in a marked grave or columbarium. Fully mortal remains must be buried in a marked grave in a blessed location. Deacon Bannio, Fr Ballard and I can advise on these matters. McAfee Funeral Home is the Catholic Funeral Director in Greenville and they can also advise.

Your Pastor,
Fr. Longenecker