

905 Transplantation is a manifestation of compassion for our neighbours and of solidarity with them. Making a gift of one's organs for transplantation is heroic service for the purpose of saving lives. this service was esteemed highly by Saint John Paul II: "thanks to science, and to the professional training and commitment of doctors and health-care workers ... new and wonderful opportunities are presented ... to love our neighbour in new ways; in evangelical terms, to love 'to the end'" (see Jn 13:1).⁵⁵⁰

906 the selfless gift of a part of one's own body (organ or tissue) for the good of another who has urgent need of it, is a manifestation of Christian love for one's neighbour. On the other hand, the trafficking of human organs is intolerable and a moral evil: "Any procedure which tends to commercialize human organs or to consider them as items of exchange or trade must be considered morally unacceptable, because to use the body as an 'object' is to violate the dignity of the human person."⁵⁵¹

907 A living person (the donor) can donate only one of a pair of organs on the condition that it will not jeopardize his or her own life. "[V]ital organs which occur singly in the body can be removed only after death, that is from the body of someone who is certainly dead. this requirement is self-evident, since to act otherwise would mean to cause intentionally the death of the donor in disposing of his organs."⁵⁵²

5. Euthanasia

908 Euthanasia (from the Greek meaning good death) is an action or inaction which by its nature or its intention causes a person's death with the purpose of eliminating all sorts of diverse suffering.⁵⁵³ Euthanasia is used not only on the gravely ill but also on newborn infants with birth defects. In addition to euthanasia "by individual request," there is also "social euthanasia," in which the decision to terminate a life comes not from the person himself but from society, when further medical treatment is deemed futile or excessively expensive, since the necessary resources could be used to treat many other people.

⁵⁵⁰ JOHN PAUL II, Address to Participants of the First International Congress of the Society for Organ Sharing (June 20, 1991).

⁵⁵¹ JOHN PAUL II, Address to the 18th International Congress of the Transplantation Society (August 29, 2000), 3.

⁵⁵² JOHN PAUL II, Address to the 18th International Congress of the Transplantation Society (August 29, 2000), 4.

⁵⁵³ See JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical *Evangelium vitae* [the Gospel of Life], 65.

909 The Church teaches:

Nothing and no one can in any way permit the killing of an innocent human being, whether a fetus or an embryo, an infant or an adult, an old person, or one suffering from an incurable disease, or a person who is dying. Furthermore, no one is permitted to ask for this act of killing, either for himself or herself or for another person entrusted to his or her care, nor can he or she consent to it, either explicitly or implicitly. Nor can any authority legitimately recommend or permit such an action. For it is a question of the violation of the divine law, an offense against the dignity of the human person, a crime against life, and an attack on humanity⁵⁵⁴

910 Sometimes, because of prolonged and unbearable pain, people may ask for death for themselves or for another. However, such pleas for death are not always a manifestation of a true desire for assisted suicide or euthanasia. In reality, the gravely ill person needs love, attention, prayer, and spiritual support. Those who are close to the infirm—parents, children, family members, friends, and also doctors, nurses, clergy and other members of the church community—are called to surround the infirm with such care.

⁵⁵⁴ CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Declaration on Euthanasia (May 5, 1980), 2.