Secular or Religious: Terminal Sedation as a Catholic Sustainable Alternative to Euthanasia

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Abstract:

Patients during end-of-life care can request terminal sedation so as to eliminate suffering and allow for a peaceful death. Given Roman Catholic morality, this is not morally problematic. Terminal sedation avoids euthanasia while sustaining the dignity of human life. Advocates for euthanasia frequently argue terminal sedation is morally equivalent to euthanasia. However, this is a misguided understanding of terminal sedation. Under the Principle of Double Effect, terminal sedation is easily separated from euthanasia due to intent and outcomes of the intervention itself. Therefore, terminal sedation is favorable to euthanasia as sustains the sanctity of human life in end-of-life care.