

Glossary of Terms for “A Catholic Approach to Palliative Care Video Series”

Advance care planning - a process of communication between an individual, their family, and their health care agents to understand, reflect on, discuss, and plan for future health care decisions

Advance directive - a document that specifies an individual’s wishes for their future medical care if they become too ill to participate in medical decision making

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation - a medical procedure involving repeated compression of a patient's chest, performed in an attempt to restore the blood circulation and breathing of a person whose heart has stopped

Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Healthcare Services or ERDs - a document that offers moral guidance, drawn from the Catholic Church's theological and moral teachings, on various aspects of health care delivery

Healthcare proxy - an individual’s legally recognized spokesperson for healthcare decision making, also known as a healthcare agent, surrogate decision maker, medical power of attorney, or attorney-in-fact

Henri Nouwen - a Dutch Catholic priest, professor, writer and theologian whose interests were rooted primarily in psychology, pastoral ministry, spirituality, social justice and community

Hospice care - a form of palliative care, provided by an interdisciplinary team, and offered in the last stages of a terminal illness to provide physical, emotional, and spiritual comfort through the dying process, hospice services can begin when two physicians certify that the patient has six months or less to live

Interdisciplinary team - a group of healthcare clinicians from different healthcare backgrounds or “disciplines” such as medicine, social work, or spiritual care who care for patients as a team

L'Arche - an international private voluntary organization that works for the creation and growth of homes, programs, and support networks with people who have intellectual disabilities

Lumen Gentium “Light of the Nations” - one of the principal documents of the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church

Mechanical ventilation - a form of life-support where an individual is connected to a machine to help them breathe when they cannot breathe on their own

National Healthcare Decisions Day - a US national initiative to encourage individuals to have advance care planning conversations and prepare advance directives held every April 16th

Palliative care - specialized medical care for people living with serious illness. It focuses on providing relief from the symptoms and stress of a serious illness, whatever the diagnosis. The goal is to improve quality of life for both the patient and the family. Palliative care can be received alongside curative medical treatments

Palliative care team - a team of professionals that includes doctors, nurses, social workers, and chaplains who are experts and providing palliative care to people living with serious illness

POLST or MOLST - an acronym for portable medical orders signed by a licensed medical professional indicating an individual's preferences for medical treatments such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation or mechanical ventilation

Tame death - the cultural experience of death in the centuries prior to the scientific and technological revolution when people accepted death as a normal part of life and a home death was common

Technological imperative - a tendency in medicine to order more diagnostics tests, perform more procedures, and pursue more medical interventions, all with the aim of prolonging life and staving off death, oftentimes, these aggressive medical treatments become the source of clinical or moral dilemmas, or even a source of unnecessary suffering

Wild death - the current state of dying in the US where patients are surrounded by science and technology, devices, strangers and professionals – contributing to an overall sense of anxiety or unease

World Day of the Sick – a day of awareness in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes held every February 11th