

Kill the Pain, Not the Patient: Ministers

The Port Pirie Ministers' Association, representing the churches of Port Pirie, unanimously support, promote and defend the dignity and sanctity of human life from the moment of conception to the frailties of disease, sickness and old age until death.

The association with one voice upholds that it is immoral for any person (including doctors, nurses, family members or the sick person) to withhold or refuse ordinary treatment, that is provision of basic care, food, water, medicine or to provide or omit treatment, which directly results in an intended death.

The association supports the killing of pain not the patient. Some medical procedures and treatment in alleviating pain and suffering may result in or hasten the death of the patient. These procedures and treatments are applied in proportion to the pain and suffering of the sick person.

The association believes that there is no duty to implement or accept medical treatment or procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary or disproportionate to the expected outcome for the sick person. It is okay to refuse these treatments and procedures.

In their pastoral care of the sick, the ministers of the association acknowledge the suffering and anguish not only to the patient, but also of those related to the patient including family, friends, medical staff and religious ministers.

Before such suffering let us do all that we can- physically, emotionally, spiritually and medically- to provide real comfort to each other and our fellow suffering human being as an expression of our love and solidarity without the lethal alternative of administering death, more popularly known as "euthanasia".

Reverend Ken Wright,
Chairman of the Port Pirie Ministers' Association
On behalf of the member churches including Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Community, Lutherans and Uniting.

Letter to the Editor, Recorder Newspaper, Port Pirie South Australia. March 19, 2009

Ian Wood comment. It appears Ken says it would be immoral to refuse tube feeding and artificial ventilation in paragraph 2! Yet in paragraph 4 he said the patient could refuse any burdensome treatment! This is a contradiction.

In paragraph 3 he supports the "double effect" which is a very grey and disputed area of pain relief. He obviously has no sympathy with, and provides no practical alternative, to those 5 out of 100 patients dying when pain relief is not effective.

For further comment on this letter, please refer to Ian Wood response to Recorder articles from Father Quinn and Rev Ken Wright, on the following page.