



Statement on Dealing with terminally sick and dying people

Death is a striking moment in human life. It causes pain and fear, making succour and solace necessary. Fear of dying must not be trivialized or interpreted as unbelief or lack of faith.

Since losses can rarely be accepted immediately, grief must be accompanied truthfully, sensitively, and effectively. The dying person's individual needs – physical needs, need for security, respect and self-realization, contact, affection and love, as well as peace and calm based on faith – must be taken into account when accompanying him/her during death.

Support for a dying person requires a very special relationship of trust and confidence, and means being able to feel for his/her situation. The meeting may take the form of a conversation characterized by the truth or of a silent, wordless presence. Love does not need words to reach a dying person. A companion seeking to convey such love will intuitively feel what the dying person needs.

Accompanying a dying person also means providing support for the relatives. It may take years to master the loss.

Instructions for ministers:

A minister must strive

- to understand and accept the grief of the dying person in the various phases of death.
- to identify and respond to the needs of the dying person.
- not to trivialize the dying person's fears or to interpret them as unbelief or lack of faith.
- to display great sensitivity in recalling the comfort inherent in our faith.
- to build up a special relationship of trust and confidence with the dying person in order to support him/her truthfully, competently, and effectively. A "white lie" is of no use.
- to help the dying person recover his/her inner peace and calm.
- to celebrate Holy Communion with the dying person so that he/she can depart from this world into the next world in peace.
- to support the dying person's relatives for as long as necessary and with the requisite intensity and consolation.

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