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From: Inquiry into End of Life Choices POV eSubmission Form
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Inquiry Name: Inquiry into End of Life Choices

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SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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There have been media reports of medical staff being reluctant to administer pain relief for fear of hastening death and being held accountable by relatives.

The subjective value given to freedom from pain vis-a-vis the prolonging life can vary from person to person and one can sympathise with medical staff faced with such dilemmas. But at the same time, these dilemmas highlight the profound value of life. To choose to relieve suffering through non-lethal means, even if it hastens death, is a choice made in the context of the sacredness of life and the human person. In contrast to this is the view that fundamentally life has only relative value against freedom from suffering or other values. Which is not to say there would be universal agreement about the relative weight to be given to life, but it allows room for a rationale that some lives are not worth living.

The argument for euthanasia is typically based on a claimed right to a autonomous decision of a person that his or her own life is not worth living. However, it is impossible to quarantine such a value. This can be observed in jurisdictions where euthanasia or assisted suicide has been legalised. In practice, it is not contained to autonomous choice. Furthermore, suicidal thoughts and wishes, which are almost a universal experience, have become a reason for justifying death.

I would urge the Committee to take into account the effect on public perception that adopting a policy under which some lives are judged not worth living would have. The dilemmas currently faced around end of life decisions are not a reason to change our laws against intentional killing.

Respectfully yours,
John Wynter

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File1:

File2:

File3: