

Sanctity of life



Christians believe life is sacred.

- Life is a gift from God.
- God created life, so only God can take it.
- The 10 Commandments say: "Do not commit murder".
- St Paul taught "Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. It is not your own!"
- The Magisterium teaches that "all human life is sacred."

Christianity and Euthanasia

Euthanasia is a "gentle and easy death". There are three types:

Assisted suicide – Providing a seriously ill person with the means to commit suicide

Voluntary euthanasia – The situation where someone dying in pain asks a doctor to end their life painlessly.

Non – voluntary euthanasia – Ending someone's life painlessly when they are unable to ask, but you have good reason for thinking they would want you to do so, e.g. switching off a life-support machine

Euthanasia is **illegal** almost everywhere, apart from Holland and Switzerland.

All Christians oppose Euthanasia because:

- Life is sacred and should only be taken by God
- "Do not kill".
- Doctors are required to save lives, not kill.
- People with terminal illnesses should be cared for in hospices.

However, there are some different views:

- Most Christians accept that doctors should be allowed to give lots of pain killing drugs even if they will shorten the patient's life.
- Expensive treatments need not be carried out to lengthen the lives of dying patients.

Palliative Care

Hospices, and those organisations that offer similar care, are guided by doctors to provide pain relieving medication, nursing care, supervision and practical help until natural death occurs. The Catholic Church, along with many other Christians, support those who provide palliative care because it respects the value of every person until their natural death. Medication is provided to reduce pain and to enable the individual to retain as much dignity and quality of life as possible.

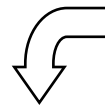
Life and Death



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CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Why do Christians believe in life after death?

Christianity and life after death

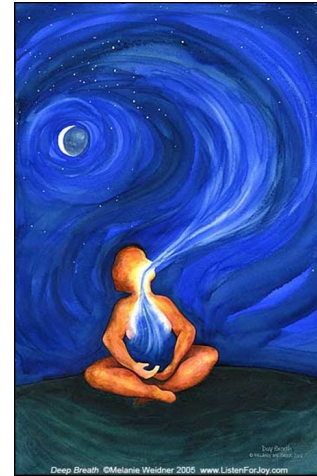


All Christians believe that this life is not all there is. There are two Christian beliefs about what happens after death.

Resurrection of the body

When people die they stay in the grave until the end of the world. Then God will raise everyone and judge them. Good Christians will go to heaven and the bad people will go to hell.

- Its what St. Paul teaches in 1Cor 15.
- It was Jesus' body that rose from the dead.
- It is part of the Christian creed.



Immortality of the soul

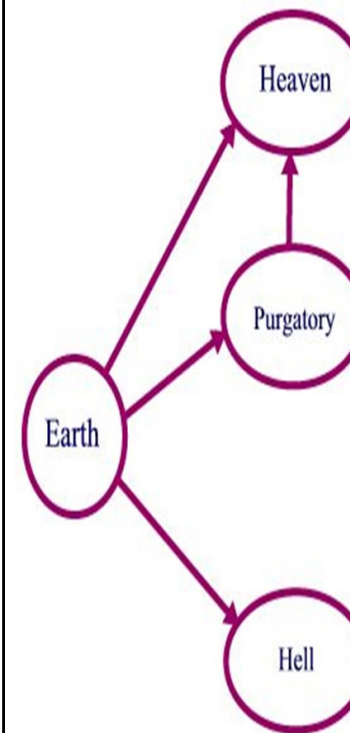
Many Christians (including Catholics) do not believe in the resurrection of the body. They believe in immortality– that the soul lives on after death. When people die their soul goes straight to heaven.

- Jesus said the criminal on the cross would be in paradise straight after death.
- Things like near death experiences (the soul leaves the body and goes down a tunnel of light to God) show the immortality of the soul.

- The **Bible** teaches that there is an afterlife.
- **Jesus rose from the dead.**
- The **creed** says there is a life after death.
- The 'evidence' of **ghosts** or spirits which may haunt various places and are believed to be the souls of those whose passage into the next life has been disrupted.
- Reported **Near Death Experiences** have occurred at the moment of death whereby people experience the sensation of floating away from their body towards a bright light where they meet a religious figure or holy being.
- They believe that life after death gives life **meaning and purpose.**

Why some people do not believe in life after death?

- Many religions teach different things about what an afterlife may be like and which God (or gods) may be there. E.g. Buddhism teaches reincarnation, Christianity teaches resurrection. They cannot all be true.
- Humanists believe that the only ways we can live on are in other people's memories of us, in the work we have done while alive, or in our children.
- People in religions simply believe an afterlife exists by faith but ultimately they cannot prove their belief to be true.
- Near Death Experiences can be explained by the brain being starved of oxygen (causing the tunnelling effect) and so producing hallucinations (which explain the sensation of leaving your body).
- Ghosts and poltergeists are figments of people's imaginations.
- The soul has no physical substance and therefore does not exist.



Rich man and Lazarus

- A rich man lives a life of luxury but ignores Lazarus, the beggar who lives at his gate.
- Lazarus dies and is taken to heaven. At the same time the rich man dies and is taken to hell.
- The rich man asks for some comfort, but he is reminded:
- "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony." (Luke 16:19-31)
- The message of the story is that everyone will be judged on how they have lived their life and rewarded accordingly.

Unmerciful servant

- Jesus tells of a man who owes money to the king.
- Not wanting to go to prison, he begs the king for mercy.
- After receiving mercy and being free from his debt, the man goes in search of a man who owes *him* money.
- This other man asks him for mercy, however, he rejects the requests for mercy.
- The king is furious and puts the first man in prison until he pays what he owes.
- Jesus finishes the story with these words: 'This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother and sister from your heart' (Matt 18:35)

