Palliative Care: our commitment in Murcia, Spain

PRESS RELEASE. Palliative Care to counter the globalization of indifference and euthanasia. The commitment of the Pontifical Academy for Life illustrated in Murcia, Spain.

Murcia, Spain, 14 November -. "When we speak of Palliative Care we mean a complete and holistic approach to caring for a person in the terminal phase of their life. Clinical practice states that requests for euthanasia are often motivated by physical pain and a sense of despair and loneliness. Palliative Care restores dignity to the patient, responding to his or her needs and problems. Promoting Palliative Care is the true new frontier of today. Euthanasia appears an easier path to take but results in the globalization of indifference. Palliative Care globalizes humanization and focuses on the importance of relationships and the alliance between the patient, the healthcare workers and the family, in an effective communication network".

This was reiterated by Msgr. Renzo Pegoraro, Chancellor of the Pontifical Academy for Life, in his wide-ranging and articulated intervention at the opening of the International Congress on Palliative Care held in Murcia, Spain, organized by the Catholic University of San Antonio in Murcia and by the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for the Marriage and Family Sciences. Msgr. Pegoraro greeted participants on behalf of Msgr. Vincenzo Paglia, President of the Pontifical Academy for Life and Grand Chancellor of the Pontifical John Paul II Institute.

Addressing the theme "Fragility and death in the Doctrine of the Church", Msgr. Pegoraro illustrated the issues that challenge "believers and all men and women of good will" starting from the question "how can we accompany people who are suffering and who are dying?". At the end of life "every therapeutic intervention must focus on the good of the person, their dignity, their active involvement in the decisions that concern them". The patient must be taken care of in an "holistic" way, providing
support to their family and in the awareness of the "limits" of the human condition and of medicine itself. “We must intervene on the language we use: not 'cure' but 'take full care' of those suffering and of the family. At the same time, we must always ask ourselves whether a medical intervention is therapeutically or clinically purposeful or contrary to caring”. The Encyclical Evangelium Vitae of 1995 by John Paul II - noted Msgr. Pegoraro - warns against the use of "disproportionate" means. "But beware: the reference to ‘over treatment’ refers to medical procedures. Palliative Care reinforces pain therapy and involves a global vision that takes on all dimensions of a person's existence and suffering ".

Msgr. Pegoraro listed some criteria for approaching the terminally ill: communicating clearly, understanding and responding to their needs and discomfort, alleviating pain, developing a therapy and treatment plan.

"Palliative Care today represents the most mature and advanced form of closeness and humanity and the Church is well aware of this. Research shows that requests to anticipate death are often motivated by pain, loneliness and despair and not by the desire for euthanasia. Palliative Care restores dignity to patients, helping them in the control of symptoms, assisting them in relational and emotional difficulties and in the process of adaptation of the patient and their family in the terminal and delicate phase of life. Death cannot be avoided; it must be humanized through emotional proximity and in support. This is why Palliative Care is a theme at the heart of the work of the Pontifical Academy for Life which has already held an international conference in Rome, another in Houston and after this appointment in Spain, the Pontifical Academy will host another appointment in Rome as well as others on different continents".

Murcia, November 14th 2018