

What should I do about my mother in light of Church teaching?

My mom had a severe stroke. She is paralyzed and on a feeding tube because she can't swallow. She understands us, but we have a real hard time understanding her most of the time. She is not happy with her present state in life. Several times she has looked directly at my husband and said something to the effect that she didn't want her feeding tube any longer. She does have a directive that says no food or water if she's not able to care for herself. I don't want to do anything to bring on her death.

—Debby

Debby, I am terribly sorry to read of your mother's plight, so let's put all of this in the proper perspective.

First, your mother is seeking assisted suicide though she perhaps does not realize it or intend it. She is in agony and she wants someone to starve her to death because she feels that death would be the only acceptable way out of her suffering.

Second, your mother is a human person created by God and her soul should be among the most important concerns you and your husband have at the moment, regardless of how discomforting it is for you to witness her in this state.

Third, please consider my personal experience with this.

When my mother was in her late fifties and well on her way to being totally bedridden with rheumatoid

arthritis, she waited one day until my dad left for work and then overdosed on her pain medication. When Dad found her, she was unconscious and he called for an ambulance. Several days later, having been treated by a group of specialists at UCLA, my mother regained consciousness and (I was standing there witnessing this) she looked at my father and told him that she had

been on a journey to hell, but God called her back and said He would give her one more chance.

After that, my mother lived five more years and was totally bedridden. She had her bad days, to be sure, but her faith became so strong that she not only repented of her act but was the light of everyone's life because of her courage. Her smiles far outnumbered her tears.

Your mother is aware, at some level, that she too belongs to God.

Debby, your husband should understand what I know you do: Life is a gift and life is not always pleasant. But the gift is given by the same Creator Who will take it in His time. You and your husband are in my prayers.

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