

Principles of Decisions Involving Death

- Every Death is Unique - Every death is individual and unique. Rules and policies around death should be flexible to accommodate the wishes of the dying person and the person's family.

- Wisdom should Prevail - In complex situations the individuals involved should take the time to think things through and make a determination based on the circumstances rather than just citing policy. Where there is conflict, efforts should be made to achieve resolution. New situations should be carefully considered in determining the ethics involved and the rules and policies that preserve the rights and liberties of the patient and the family.

- The Patient has Choice - The wishes of the dying come first. The Church of Reality supports the right of the patient to choose how and when they are going to die. If the patient wants to be euthanized or wants to be fully awake until their last breath, their choice should be honored.

- Suicide and Doctor Assisted Suicide - If a person is terminally ill or is in a hospice program and doctors have determined that they have a short time to live, then the individual has the right to determine when and how their life will end. If they decide to end their life, then that decision should be honored and they should be allowed to have help in terminating their life from their doctors and their family. No one should be pressured into ending their own life.

- Who Speaks for the Patient? - If the wishes of the individual are not known and the individual patient cannot express them, then it is up to family members to express what the individual would have wanted. The wishes of the family take precedent over anyone else except for the individual.

- Living Wills - Members of the Church of Reality should have living wills and they should also make their wishes known to their friends and family so that their wishes are clear. That way other people won't have to guess as to what you would have wanted.

- A person is dead when - they have lost consciousness with no reasonable chance of recovery. Although one might be declared legally dead, later when the body dies, a person's last moment is the last moment that they were conscious. If you are brain dead, you are dead.

- Other Religions to Stay Out - Realists have a right to their own religious choices regarding end of life decisions and free from the imposition of beliefs of other religions and cultures. It infringes on our religious freedom when another religion or the government tries to impose their values on us against our will. Our rights to our religious choices are superior to foreign beliefs or laws that infringe on our end of life freedoms.