

ThM 575 *Catholic Bioethics*
FINAL EXAMINATION 2026

To be returned **electronically via e-mail** (ldysinger@stjohnsem.edu) by Thursday, May 21, 2026. In your answers, when you refer primary texts (as I hope you will) **DO NOT** simply cut and paste the text into your answer. **SUMMARIZE ACCURATELY** what the relevant text says, just as you would in any real pastoral situation. Please answer all parts of both questions. There is no minimum or maximum number of pages.

Please remember that whenever your answers include anything other than your own words or ideas, you must place the cited text in quotation marks and include appropriate references. When citing text from the Internet always include in your reference the original author and source of the material you cited, together with the Webpage HTTP reference. For example:

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia, 103.4. <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1103.htm>

And **not** merely: <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/1103.htm>

1) You are the pastor of a large parish in your diocese. One of your parishioners asks to see you. She is 35 years old and she explains that her widowed father, who is also a member of the parish (but whom you have not seen for some months), has been diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer and is bedridden. Her father has requested and been prescribed a lethal medication to be taken orally. He intends to end his life in the next week. His daughter asks whether you would be willing to visit him and offer him the sacraments of anointing and the Eucharist. She also asks whether his funeral mass can be celebrated in your church..

How do you respond?

2) You are the pastor of a parish in your diocese. One of your parishioners has been diagnosed with Lou-Gehrig's Disease (a.k.a. Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis; Motor Neuron Disease) and wants your advice. He is 32 years old, an active parishioner, unmarried, and is the principal of the elementary school in your parish. He has been told that his disease is incurable, and will result in a slow, progressive paralysis, beginning with his feet and legs, eventually (perhaps within three to five years) making it impossible for him to breathe without mechanical assistance. He is trying to decide what decisions to make in regard to his health care. He has several questions:

- A) He has been told that many patients with his disease decide never to allow a ventilator (respirator) to be used: that is, when the paralysis becomes so severe that a ventilator is medically recommended, they refuse to give their permission. **He asks you whether the Church permits this.**
- B) He also wants to know whether the Church would allow him to take drugs that would make him unconscious when it becomes difficult for him to breathe. He wishes to donate his organs, and he has been told that he may be a "non-heart-beating" donor-candidate; but in this situation it would be necessary for him to allow a ventilator to be used for a short time, then turned off in the operating room where his organs would be removed after his heart stops beating. He wants to be given drugs that will make him unconscious as soon as he finds it hard to breathe; but he does not care what happens to him after that, as long as he is not conscious. The representative from "One Legacy" (the organ-procurement agency) has told him that this can be arranged. **He wants to know whether the Church would allow this.**

What do you tell him, and what pastoral recommendations do you make?