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The bishops of the Archdiocese of Seattle reiterated the Catholic Church's opposition to assisted suicide in response to a news report about a man who used a fatal drug combination to end his own life under Washington state's Death with Dignity Act.

The Associated Press report Aug. 26 included a photo of Robert Fuller receiving a blessing at St. Therese Parish in Seattle a few days before his death and asserts that "Fuller's decision (to end his life) was widely known and accepted among the parishioners."

Fuller was terminally ill and administered two syringes into his feeding tube to take his own life, the report said.

The report raised concerns among Archbishop J. Peter Sartain and Coadjutor Archbishop Paul D. Etienne "because it may cause confusion among Catholics and others who share our reverence for human life," the archdiocese said in a statement.

At the time the photo was taken, "parish leadership was not aware of Mr. Fuller's intentions," it said. The priest in the photo, Jesuit Father Quentin Dupont, "was told Mr. Fuller was dying and wanted the blessing of the faith community."

When parish leaders learned of Fuller's plans, another priest, Father Maurice Mamba, met with him "to discuss the sacred gift of human life and how we are called to

respect and revere that gift as disciples of Jesus," the archdiocese said.

"Our hearts go out to the family and friends of Robert Fuller and to all those who suffer chronic and or terminal illness," it said, noting that, "as Catholics, we always strive to be present to those who suffer and to those who are facing death."

Catholics believe that all life is a gift from God and that "every person has inherent and inalienable dignity because we are made in God's image and likeness," it said.

"Based on this teaching and concern for human life and the common good, the Catholic Church does not support suicide in any form, including medically assisted suicide," the statement said.

"We have and will continue to accompany" those with terminal illnesses "by providing compassionate care and spiritual counsel," it said, noting that "the pastoral, healing and consolation ministries of the church always take place in the light of faith and hope in the resurrection."

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