



Focus on Religious Freedom

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Rockville Centre diocesan Bishop John Barres says,
“We will never submit to New York’s culture of death.”

Four orders of women religious are joining the Diocese of Rockville Centre, Catholic Health System of Long Island, and nursing homes in Queens, the Bronx, Westchester, Hartsdale, and Hawthorne, NY, in suing New York State over its new physician assisted suicide law.

The Carmelite Sisters for the Aged and Infirm, Dominican Sisters of Hawthorne, Missionary Sisters of St. Benedict, and Little Sisters of the Poor, along with the diocese, nursing homes, and the Catholic health system that runs six hospitals on Long Island, contend that the law would force them to “abandon their religious beliefs” by mandating that they counsel patients about assisted suicide and help them qualify for and receive life-ending drugs.

“New York is forcing sick and dying people to consider suicide at their lowest moment, regardless of whether they ask for it or not,” said lead attorney Mark Rienzi, president of Becket, the religious liberty law firm representing the Catholic plaintiffs.

“Worse, it’s conscripting the nuns who care for them into its suicide cult on pain of crushing fines and professional ruin,” Rienzi said. “That is both unconscionable and unconstitutional. We’re confident the federal courts will put a stop to it.”

Bishop John Barres said in a statement. “Assisted suicide is a grave moral failure that puts the elderly, the disabled, and those suffering from mental and emotional illness at risk of abuse and manipulation. Christ the Divine Physician calls us to accompany the sick and dying with compassion, not abandon them to death. The court should protect that millennia-old mission.”

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