

Dignity of the Human Person

A fundamental value underlying ethics in health care and social services is respect for the dignity of each human person. This value aspires to protect the multiple interests of the person – from bodily to psychological to spiritual to cultural integrity. This respect for the dignity of each human person has been acknowledged and enshrined in the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Human dignity is based on the physiological, psychological, social and spiritual uniqueness of being a person. Persons are created with intelligence and free will, with a moral consciousness and a potential for self-fulfilment. They possess the radical capacity to know, to love, to choose freely and to determine the direction of their lives. Each person is irreplaceable, with an intrinsic value and purpose in life. All persons are equal in dignity and, therefore, are to be treated with equal respect.

Our Christian faith holds that all persons are created in the image and likeness of God, and are called to know, love and be in communion with God, with all other persons and creation for all eternity. We believe that God became human in Jesus Christ, enabling all human beings to share the dignity of being daughters or sons of God, sisters or brothers of Jesus Christ.

Respect is due to every person. In light of gospel values, differences of age, sex, race, religion, social and cultural background, health status, sexual orientation, intelligence, economic status, employment, or other qualitative distinctions do not take away from the dignity shared by all persons, whether or not they are aware of their dignity.



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dignity of each
person is to
be cherished
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equal respect.*

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