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Message of the Cardinal Secretary of State to the participants in the International Symposium "Religion and Medical Ethics: Palliative Care and the Mental Health of the Elderly"

The following is the Message sent this morning by His Eminence Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin to the participants in the International Symposium "Religion and Medical Ethics: Palliative Care and the Mental Health of the Elderly", organized by the Pontifical Academy for Life and the World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) (*Augustinianum*, 11 to 12 December 2019):

Message of the Cardinal Secretary of State

Your Excellency,

I offer cordial greetings to you and to the scholars and experts from different religious traditions assembled in Rome in these days for the International Symposium on *Religion and Medical Ethics. Palliative Care and Elderly Mental Health*, as you explore this complex issue of pressing concern.

The theme of this event, co-sponsored by the Pontifical Academy for Life and the World Innovation Summit for Health, seeks to place the elderly - especially those suffering from mental health issues and those in the final stages of life - at the very centre of our consideration. The frailty and vulnerability of people in need of palliative and other types of care should never permit a merely utilitarian attitude to take hold. Tragically, they are all too often overlooked, rejected or even "discarded with an attitude of abandonment, which is actually real and hidden euthanasia" (*Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Elderly*, Saint Peter's Square, 28 September 2014). Hence the urgent need that they should find a solid support for their God-given dignity and worth in the ethical and spiritual vision shared by the various religions.

May the ecumenical and interreligious cooperation, evident in this Symposium, continue to be fruitful in defending the care to which the elderly are entitled and in building a culture of encounter and acceptance in which they are esteemed and loved.

In expressing these sentiments, I have the honour to convey the Holy Father's prayerful good wishes for the Symposium and its important deliberations.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Pietro. Card. Parolin

Secretary of State
