

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom



Belgium

Archbishop Andre-Joseph Leonard (attacked on [April 18, 2013](#) in [Brussels](#) by four half-naked feminists with water bottles of the type used by pilgrims at Lourdes, after their removal by police he was seen to pick up one of the bottles and kiss the imprinted image of Mary;

on [February 7, 2014](#) from [Brussels](#) called on the faithful to fast and pray for the defeat of the extension of the Law of Euthanasia to children)

Fanny Rachel Clain (aged 20, missionary, French citizen, injured in the [March 22, 2016 Brussels](#) airport terror bombing, not hospitalized)

Herman Spaargaren (President of the Evangelical Alliance, on [February 21, 2014](#) spoke on the legalization of child euthanasia "The problem is that nobody thinks about what is coming after death. Also the meaning of life in the sight of God has become a non-issue")

Joni Eareckson Tada (broadcaster and disability activist, in a speech in [Nashville, Tennessee, United States](#) on [March 14, 2014](#) challenged lawmakers to explain why children can be offered euthanasia but denied alcohol, tobacco, and pornography)

Fr Jos Vanderlee (aged 65, stabbed in his hands by an asylum seeker on [August 1, 2016](#) in [Lanaken](#) after he refused a demand for money, hospitalized)

Joseph Empey (aged 20, missionary, U.S. citizen, injured in the [March 22, 2016 Brussels](#) airport Islamic terror bombing, hospitalized with leg injuries and second degree burns)

Kris Vleugels (on [February 21, 2014](#) called on King Philippe to refuse to sign the child euthanasia bill despite the fact that it would trigger a constitutional crisis and possibly end the monarchy)

Luca Volonte (chairman Dignitatis Humanae Institute, said on [November 5, 2013](#) in [Rome, Italy](#) of the government's attempt to extend euthanasia to children: "The developments in Belgium starkly demonstrate the mission creep that is inevitably pursued once euthanasia is legalized, a relentless march towards a culture of death with less and less justification being needed as ending the lives of the vulnerable becomes evermore socially acceptable. Last year saw a 25% increase in euthanasia with Belgium doctors justifying the killing of patients for suffering blindness, anorexia and depression. Now the target is children. Children who are not deemed legally responsible to smoke, buy alcohol or get married yet will supposedly be able to rationally decide whether their young lives are worth living. That a government would actually deem this feasible and acceptable is both sickening and deplorable...Once a society accepts the principle of death as an acceptable course of treatment, it is only a matter of time before any restrictions placed upon that principle are diminished and removed. Euthanising children is the latest, tragic development of this flawed, nihilistic logic")

Mason Wells (aged 19, missionary, U.S. citizen, injured in the [March 22, 2016 Brussels](#) airport Islamic terror bombing, hospitalized with a foot injury)

Fr Michel Gaillard (Brussels Airport chaplain, later said of the [March 22, 2016](#) terror bombing “Most of those affected here were common, simple people, catching planes for holidays, to visit family members over Easter or to do their jobs”)

Miho Irak (aged 77, Turkish citizen, Belgian resident for 22 years, father of eight including Nezahat Irak, **died of natural causes** in [Machelen](#) on [August 20, 2016](#), denied assistance to be buried in Turkey by the Turkish government after it was discovered he was a Christian)

Nezahat Irak (daughter of Miho Irak, described the refusal of the Turkish government to assist her father’s burial)

Br Rene Stockman FC (superior general of the Brothers of Charity, reported on [April 28, 2017](#) to have objected when the mostly lay board of directors of the psychiatric hospitals operated by his order voted to allow euthanasia, said “We deplore this new vision...as general superior we cannot accept this decision, because it is going totally against our charism of the charity...Yes, there was a lot of pressure, but pressure doesn’t mean that we have to capitulate. All those who were against us are now singing that finally the group of the Brothers of Charity capitulated and came into their camp...[secularization is] poisoning the congregation”;

issued a statement opposing his hospital board's [September 12, 2017](#) vote in favor of euthanasia "where does a board of directors of an organization that specializes in mental health care, but made up of jurists and economists, and without a single expert in the field, get the knowledge to give its opinion on such a matter? Some of them, with all due respect for their person, have never had first-hand experience with a psychiatric patient, let alone cared for one or treated one. And have they listened to the many objections that were raised exactly by these experts in the field, and which they continue to raise, or are they stuck in their ideological discourse, supported by a few enlightened ethicists and caught up in social trends...When those in charge of the Organization now openly claim to follow Jesus while distancing themselves from the vision of the Vatican, the Belgian bishops, and the General Administration of the Congregation of the Brothers of Charity because, supposedly, in their eyes, they ‘live far removed from reality’, then they are sadly mistaken and this is more about pride, arrogance, and ideologization at the expense of the lives of those most in need of care. Let us call a spade a spade: euthanasia is still killing a fellow human being, even if it happens with the utmost due care. How in the name of God is this supposed to be compatible with our charism of charity, the charism of life?";

along with his congregation removed two monks from the board of directors at the [end of September 2018](#) for failing to oppose the euthanasia policy;

reported on [May 8, 2020](#) to have stated he was determined to see the name of his congregation removed from the name of the hospital chain after the Vatican ruled the chain could no longer claim to be Catholic, accused by the hospital board chairman of an attempt to claim the assets of the hospitals to pay for missionary work in Africa)

Richard Norby (aged 66, missionary, U.S. citizen, injured in the [March 22, 2016 Brussels](#) airport Islamic terror bombing, hospitalized with leg injuries and second degree burns)

Rocky Gathright (missionary, U.S. citizen, had dropped off a friend at the [Brussels](#) airport just before the [March 22, 2016](#) Islamic terror bombing, tended to the wounded)

Stephane Mercier (professor of philosophy, reported on [March 30, 2017](#) to have been suspended from an officially Catholic university in [Louvain](#) after a campus feminist group condemned his questioning of the 'right to choose [i.e. abortion]', said “The worldly powers that be, and the spiritual powers of darkness, are at war with everything truly Christian. So we’re fighting for life and for the Lord’s commandments against evil powers”)