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Euthanasia: barbarians at the gate

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My father was 84 years old when a serious fall left him a quadriplegic. He kept his extraordinary intellectual capacity intact while suffering from an irreversible paralysis from the neck down that only allowed him to move his head a little, a situation aggravated by the progression of a blindness that ended up being almost complete.

For the next four years, quadriplegic and nearly blind, he was always connected to a machine and dependent on others. This radical dependence was doubly hard for someone so full of energy and so jealous of his freedom, symbolized by his passion for the sea, and yet, after the natural process of mourning and readjustment, he never looked back and we never heard him complain. Eight weeks before his accident, he had given a talk to a large group of IESE business school MBA students, the highlight of which was when he urged them to never give up with a humor that would surprise anyone who didn't know him: "...and when you are down on the ground, with the enemy's knee on your chest and his hands on your throat... Whack! Kick him in the balls." Well, after the sudden turn of his life, he decided to fight his last combat with the same courage, serenity and fighting spirit that always characterized him, with resolute spirit and will to victory. It was clear to him that he had to keep his post at all costs, and he did. He had been a pioneering entrepreneur endowed with enormous talents. A tireless worker, he had achieved enormous professional success starting from scratch, with austerity, spirit of sacrifice and a desire to excel, creating tens of thousands of jobs and helping to build the industrialized, modern and reconciled Spain that that admirable generation left us, with its members working side by side and overcoming together the hardships of the post-civil war period. Having said that, undoubtedly the greatest success of his life was the way he faced his injury, keeping his dignity as a human being unscathed until the very last second, gratefully revering the sacred gift of life and greeting each dawn with hope.

Although the only cases publicized by the media and movies belong to the minority who sadly fall into despair, Spain is full of people like my father who feed on the love of their loved ones, the humanity of their caregivers, their own strength or their faith in God to live fully despite enormous hardships. This immense majority, bearers of the flame of hope, is made up of heroes who have distilled the reason for living to its purest expression through suffering and who respect life as a marvelous gift possessing a transcendent and often mysterious value and meaning.



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Trying to dim the light emanating from these extraordinary people stands the evil darkness of the euthanasia law approved by the Socialist-Communist Spanish government like an oppressive rolling pin, the latest offensive of the "culture of death" denounced by St. John Paul II and yet another attempt to erase by decree the boundaries between good and evil and lead us to barbarism. Indeed, after decades of killing the lives of defenseless unborn babies, denying them the right to be born that we have been granted, it is now the turn of the other weak members of society. Thus, in a sinister metamorphosis, instead of supporting the meritorious palliative care units in which Spain remains ranked at the bottom of Europe, this abject law transforms hospitals into execution chambers and the figure of the healer into a potential executioner, destroying the doctor-patient bond of trust. For more than two thousand years, the Hippocratic oath that has guided the medical vocation has read: "I will never give anyone mortal medicine, no matter how much they ask me, nor will I take any initiative of this kind". This solemn oath in defense of life, to which the doctors and nurses who cared for my father were so faithful, is what this law shatters. In reality, we are faced with yet another ideological imposition supported by the usual lie of a completely non-existent "demand from society". The Spanish Bioethics Committee, which unanimously approved a harsh report stating that "legalizing euthanasia and/or aid to suicide means starting a path of devaluation of the protection of human life whose borders are very difficult to foresee", has not been consulted. Nor was the General Council of Medical Associations, which just as harshly recalled that euthanasia "is contrary to the Code of Medical Ethics and the positions of the World Medical Association". We cannot heal all patients as there are incurable diseases, but all patients can be taken care of. Therefore, far from being a symbol of progress, this law is a symbol of decadence, barbarism and despair that destroys centuries of civilization. Its mention of "compassionate reason" is reminiscent of the "merciful death" justified in the Nazi euthanasia law, and its qualification that this suicide/homicide will have "the legal consideration of natural death" is a nauseating perversion. Of the 195 countries in the world, only five have approved something similar, although only our soulless government has done so in the midst of a pandemic that has caused the death of so many elderly people, future victims of this law, as we will soon see.

I refuse to comment on the despicable literality of its articles, a deceitful dead letter whose only aim is to open the floodgates to the enemy, as the abortion law did. The barbarians aim, once again, at the conscientious demolition of the deepest pillars of Spain, a country that honors life like few others and in which the institution of the family fiercely protects its weakest members. Unfortunately, the announced appeals are in the hands of the fickleness of a dysfunctional and politicized Constitutional Court, and its potential repeal in a future change of government remains an open question due to the treacherous and surrendering track record of the (non) opposition main party (Partido Popular), which always

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shuns the good fight. However, civil society cannot remain in sheepish silence in the face of the advancing evil. It is time to draw a line in the sand.

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