



Organ, Eye, and Tissue Donation A Catholic Perspective

LiveOnNY

Caring for New Yorkers
through organ donation

Recognizing the desperate need to save lives, the Roman Catholic Church has long supported organ, eye and tissue donation. In this context, donation is seen as an opportunity for individuals to foster a culture that values life. Catholicism maintains that organ, eye and tissue donation allows an individual the freedom to bestow on others the most valuable gift of all, the gift of life.

The gift of life is viewed as a “genuine act of love,” and the Vatican states that it must be performed in an ethically acceptable manner. As such, donation may not commercialize human organs or consider them as items of exchange or trade.

Q. Does the Roman Catholic Church approve of organ and tissue donation?

A. Yes, the Catholic Church regards donation as an act of charity, fraternal love and self-sacrifice. Transplants are ethically and morally acceptable to the Vatican.

Q. What parts of the body can be donated for transplant?

A. The heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, pancreas, intestines, eyes, corneas, bone, skin, heart valves, tendons and veins can be transplanted.

Q. Will my decision to donate affect my medical care?

A. Strict legal guidelines mean that doctors who treat you have nothing to do with donation. Donation is only considered after every effort is made to save the patient’s life, which is the health care provider’s first priority.

Q. Is there any age restriction on joining the registry?

A. Individuals must be at least 16 years old to register.



“One of the most powerful ways for individuals to demonstrate love for their neighbor is by making an informed decision to be an organ donor.”

- Archbishop of New York
Timothy Dolan
November 2010

In October 2014, while speaking at the Transplantation Committee for the Council of Europe meeting, Pope Francis described organ donation:

“Organ donation is a testimony of love for our neighbor.”

- Pope Francis
October 2014



FACTS

- ▶ There are more than 100,000 people across the country who are waiting for life-saving transplants.
- ▶ One organ donor can save up to eight lives. One tissue donor can save or improve the lives of up to 50 people.
- ▶ There is no cost associated with donation and it does not delay funeral arrangements.
- ▶ Most major religions, including Catholicism, actively support organ donation.
- ▶ Anyone can be a potential donor, regardless of age, race or medical history.
- ▶ An open casket funeral is possible for organ, eye and tissue donors. Through the entire donation process, the body is treated with care, respect and dignity.



one donor can save up to 8 lives

Learn more about organ donation at
LiveOnNY.org

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