

# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **Diocese of Helena**

For Immediate Release  
December 9, 2008

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### **Bishop George Thomas finds assisted suicide ruling flawed**

HELENA – On Friday, Dec. 5, Montanans received a flawed ruling from Judge Dorothy McCarter.

McCarter ruled that terminally ill Montanans have the right to obtain medications that can be self-administered to bring about their death if they find their sufferings to be unbearable. McCarter ruled that “the patient’s right to die with dignity includes protection of the patient’s physician from liability under the state’s homicide statutes.”

“We are extremely disappointed in Judge McCarter’s decision,” said Bishop Thomas, Roman Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Helena. “This decision echoes disturbing actions taken in the states of Oregon and Washington, and sadly this blatant disregard for human life has now been imported into our own region,” he said.

Bishop Thomas took issue with McCarter’s question during the hearing about why the state wouldn’t extend to people the humane action of putting their sick or injured pets to sleep. He noted the difference between animals and people is the dignity and inherent worth of every person, a worth that is neither conferred nor removed by the state. He continued, “We also believe that God is the author of life and the sole arbiter of death, and we criticize in harshest terms attempts to degrade the worth of human life.

“We applaud the state attorney general’s office for considering appealing the judge’s decision, and will assist with an appeal as a friend of the court,” Thomas said.