

Organ donation and Christianity

The Christian faith is based upon the revelation of God in the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus taught people to love one another, and to embrace the needs of others. Organ donation can be considered by Christians as a genuine act of love.

We can choose to donate our organs to save the lives of many people:

"Thousands of people in the UK today are waiting for an organ transplant that could save or dramatically improve their lives. The simple act of joining the donors' register can help make the world of difference to those in need. I hope that everyone will consider whether they can give life to others after their own death." Sentamu Ebor, Archbishop of York, 2010

"The Methodist Church has consistently supported organ donation and transplantation in appropriate circumstances, as a means through which healing and health may be made possible." Methodist Church UK

"Identifying specific faith groups and their beliefs and practice around organ donation provides a basis for discussion. We then need to share information on what faith groups believe in order to foster better understanding of cultural norms. Disseminating more widely information on the cultural risk factors for kidney disease keeps people informed, assists in breaking barriers and engendering hope as people make better health choices which will positively impact their life" Sharon Platt-McDonald, Director for Health, Women Ministries and Disability Awareness for the Seventh-day Adventist churches in the British Isles.

To donate your organs is a very personal choice. The process of transplantation is acceptable in terms of moral Christian law. The Catechism of the Catholic Church 2296, explains:

"...organ transplants are in conformity with the moral law if the physical and psychological dangers and risks to the donor are proportionate to the good sought for the recipient. Organ donation after death is a noble and meritorious act and is to be encouraged as an expression of generous solidarity.



"It is not morally acceptable if the donor or his proxy has not given explicit consent. Moreover, it is not morally admissible to bring about the disabling mutilation or death of a human being, even in order to delay the death of other persons."

As Christians we believe in eternal life and preparing for death should not be a source of fear. Nothing that happens to our body, before or after death, can impact on our relationship with God:

'Neither death nor life, not anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus Christ our Lord.' Romans 8:38-9

Ensuring that we are on the NHS Organ Donor Register and that our relatives know our wishes in advance will help to relieve our loved ones of anxiety if the opportunity to donate arises, because:

"Giving organs is the most generous act of self-giving imaginable." Rt. Revd Dr Barry Morgan, Archbishop of Wales, 2011

