



FIAMC

*Fédération Internationale des Associations Médicales Catholiques
World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations*

SAVE TERRI'S LIFE

Statement from FIAMC for Press Release

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Terri Schindler-Schiavo is condemned to die of starvation and dehydration unless a new court decision intervenes.

She is not guilty of any crime, except to be a burden for her husband and for a selfish society. She is not even clinically in a permanent vegetative state, but she has been refused a re-examination of her clinical condition.

The legal basis for this inhuman decision is that she allegedly had once expressed the wish not to be fed "artificially". However, her parents and siblings contend that this is not her will and that she, in fact, would follow the clear teaching of the Catholic Church about assisted nutrition and hydration. They raise the possibility that her husband and legal guardian has manifestedly abused her.

However, the real core of the problem is the attempt to decide about the right to life of a human being, not on the basis of her/his personal dignity, but on an external evaluation of the quality of life.

The World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations is deeply concerned for the possible consequences of such a precedent setting decision in the United States system of law. In fact, if Terri, an innocent person, can be condemned to death, every person whose life will be considered of insufficient "quality" by a guardian or the court will be in danger of euthanasia performed by withdrawal of basic and ordinary care.

The importance of this case goes beyond this deplorable circumstance. It will open the floodgates to euthanasia in the United States, at all ages, without even a legislative decision.

The World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations, aware of the risks of this decision for both society and the future of the medical profession, strongly appeals to the United States authorities to react immediately and effectively to save Terri's life and to avoid the inevitable consequences.

The World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations appeals to the Bishops of the United States to mobilize every resource and influence of the Catholic Church to counteract this impending tragedy.

Following the teaching of Pope John Paul II and the evidence of medical sciences, we believe that no human being, including those in the permanent vegetative state, can be denied the respect due to a human person by provision of food and water, without which any person, regardless of his/her state of health, would be condemned to death.

Such a perversion of medicine will be the source of discrimination against other human beings, with enormous risks for human rights and democracy.

Gian Luigi Gigli, M.D.
President of FIAMC

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