



Statement by Archbishop Chaput on Terri Schiavo

March 22, 2005

"The bishops and lay faithful of Florida have the task of leading American Catholics in the Terri Schiavo case. They're working hard to provide that leadership. Our job, outside Florida, is to support Ms. Schiavo and all those concerned for her well-being with our prayers. We especially need to pray for Ms. Schiavo's family.

"At the same time, in the shadow of Holy Week and Easter, the Schiavo case does have wider implications. Cardinal Renato Martino, president of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, has already expressed his fear that allowing Ms. Schiavo to starve would be 'a grave step toward the legal approval of euthanasia in the United States.' He speaks for many other concerned persons around the world.

"Removing food and water from a patient can only be justified if the person is terminal, and natural death is imminent. For disabled persons not in imminent danger of death and able to breathe on their own, starvation and dehydration to provoke death amount, in effect, to a form of murder. Such actions attack the sanctity of human life. They reject any redemptive meaning to suffering. They can never be justified."

+Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.
Archbishop of Denver