

**OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF THE  
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ST. PETERSBURG  
REGARDING TERRY SCHIAVO**

The public discussion of Terri Schiavo's right to life touches the lives of many people in our Church and in our community. It is important that the Catholic faithful keep in mind that this is a serious moral issue, and that it can be resolved adequately neither in a court of law nor in the public forum.

Roman Catholic moral theology suggests that the removal of food and hydration from a patient, even though that person may be comatose, is justifiable only if the natural projected path of the individual's medical condition will lead inevitably to death, sooner rather than later. Some of the members of Terri's family believe that her condition is irreversible and inevitably deteriorating towards death, while others do not. As there is significant disagreement among the family of Terri Schiavo, the Catholic Church would prefer to see all parties take the safer path. The Church, however, will refrain from passing judgement on the actions of anyone in this tragic moment.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with Terri, her family and all involved in this difficult and heart wrenching situation.

October 15, 2002