



The Roman Catholic
Diocese of Phoenix

400 EAST MONROE, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85004-2336 TELEPHONE (602) 257-0030
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

August 28, 2009

Dear Priests, Deacons and Religious,

**RE: Directives for Catholics Concerning Artificially Administered
Nutrition and Hydration**

Etched in our memories are the photo and video images of Terri Schiavo and the tragic way in which her life ended. Terri was not dying and the ultimate reason her life ended was because she was not provided food and water. She died of dehydration.

Since that unforgettable tragedy many Catholics have sought guidance on how best to assist an individual or family facing questions surrounding artificially administered nutrition and hydration. The faithful desire quality care during these difficult times but they also want to be sure that they are making solid moral and spiritual decisions.

To assist priests, deacons, religious, lay faithful and all who may be involved with Catholics who face issues connected with providing food and water by artificial means, I am publishing "Directives for Catholics Concerning Artificially Administered Nutrition and Hydration." This document will be released in the September 3, 2009 issue of *The Catholic Sun* so that the faithful and all health care institutions may be informed by the teachings of the Church when making decisions or helping others make decisions about nutrition and hydration issues. These directives will be available on the Diocese of Phoenix web-site along with the Advanced Medical Directives published in July 2005.

When someone is faced with severe physical and medical challenges it is essential that his or her dignity as a person created in the image and likeness of God be respected and protected. I pray that these guidelines will help that to happen.

Asking the Risen Lord to help us all to live, to proclaim, and to defend with joy the Gospel of Life, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Thomas J. Olmsted

+ Thomas J. Olmsted
Bishop of Phoenix