

# Feed a Dog, Starve a Human



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I was talking with an attorney friend of mine who told me about a guy who, for no known reason, killed dogs and kept them in his freezer. Sounds pretty bizarre, I know. The police came to the guy's door after neighbors complained about hearing dogs howling in the condo complex. He wouldn't let the police in without a warrant. The story goes on and on but the eventual issue in court was whether there were "exigent circumstances" to enter the guy's apartment. Normally, if the police believe a human being is at risk of harm, that belief forms the basis for entering a dwelling, without a warrant. But, here, the question was whether the police could enter if they believed an animal was at risk.

I said to my friend I'm surprised there was any problem at all, considering how the concern for animal rights has risen while the concern for unborn children seems to be non-existent. I said there seems to be more concern over the care of animals than for human beings. Remember the hoopla surrounding Michael Vick and his dog-fighting enterprise? My friend agreed.

He then mentioned the case of Terri Schiavo, who coincidentally, would have been 47 years old on the day we spoke in December. We both agreed that the circumstances of Mrs. Schiavo's death were far more gruesome than the peaceful and gentle way animals are put down or the way death row prisoners are administered a lethal injection.

Mrs. Schiavo was a disabled woman whose estranged husband, Michael, and the courts to which he went, decided, after fifteen years, that she should be deprived of water and food, even though her parents and siblings were ready to care for

her for the rest of their lives. I've read enough on the subject to reach the conclusion that Mrs. Schiavo died a very slow and painful death.

My beliefs were confirmed when I read an article written by Father Frank Pavone, the president of Priests for Life, on the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mrs. Schiavo's death. He was present by her bedside the night before she died. The court forbade any one from giving her water and she suffered a painful 13-day death by starvation and dehydration.

Could you imagine the ramifications of allowing a sick animal to be put down by starvation and dehydration? The public outcry would be deafening. I'm sure there's a "cruelty to animal" law in every state which would subject someone to criminal charges and possible incarceration. Yet, our enlightened society allows a human to starve to death.

Mrs. Schiavo was not dying, she was not on life support, and she did not have a terminal illness. Yet, because of the actions of her estranged husband and the courts, she was tortured and starved to death because, according to Father Pavone, her life was considered "useless."

We see this disregard for human life and suffering even more so when it comes to abortion where medical research has found that unborn babies, as young as 8 weeks, experience and feel pain.

Yet, convicted criminals who have been sentenced to death are treated far more humanely. Whether you are for or against the death penalty, most states allow execution by lethal injection using a "three-drug cocktail" that puts the prisoner to sleep. So, no matter how heinous the crime, the criminal is gently put to sleep because our Constitution would prohibit execution by starvation and dehydration. By the way, the ACLU which is always demanding due process rights for prisoners on death row, acted as co-counsel for Mrs. Schiavo's husband.

I certainly don't advocate the killing by starvation and dehydration, but when innocent human beings are allowed to die under horrific circumstances, while animals and convicted prisoners are gently put to sleep, something is very wrong.

Being pro-life, it's disturbing to read about the extermination of the unborn by abortion, society's growing permissive stance on assisted suicide or "voluntary euthanasia" and, in Father Pavone's words, the killing of the "useless" as in the case of Mrs. Schiavo.

When human life is so devalued, when will "nonvoluntary euthanasia" become acceptable? Will we eventually be willing to embrace something like China's "one-child policy"? Who decides when a human being is "useless" in society?

Mrs. Schiavo's family should've have been allowed to care for her. No one should've decided her life was not worth living and certainly not her estranged husband, who had already started a new family with another woman and with whom he had two children. And, under no circumstances, should she have been starved to death.

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.