
Austria: Mgr. Franz Lackner (Bishops' President), "approval of assisted suicide paves the way for liberalisation of euthanasia"

In his Pastoral Letter for Lent, the Archbishop of Salzburg and President of the Austrian Bishops' Conference, Mgr. Franz Lackner, has again harshly criticised the decision by the Austrian Constitutional Court to repeal the ban on assisted suicide on grounds of unconstitutionality. The prelate openly calls on Catholics to pay attention to the legislative process and speak out, since the decriminalisation of assisted suicide has always paved the way for the liberalisation of euthanasia. "We cannot remain silent", he noted, following the many protests within the Church against the Court's decision. In view of the forthcoming revision of the law, the Archbishop invited people to contribute to the debate with objective arguments in their areas of action. "The Church runs many educational institutions, hospitals and care homes". It is precisely these places that "must accept the challenge and defend a dignified death", Mgr. Lackner said in his Pastoral Letter. "It is important to preserve the dignity of the human being until the end and to fight for a 'new culture of life'". It is clear that "no one should die in pain", the Bishop said, demanding the preferential option for hospices and palliative care units that can support people at the end of their lives "with the best professional and human care possible".

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