



Kardinaal Martini: dood Welby was geen euthanasie

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Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, the influential former Archbishop of Milan, has entered into the lively Italian public debate on euthanasia.

In an interview published on January 21 by the Italian newspaper Sole 24 Ore, the cardinal said that the death of Dr. Piergiorgio Welby, a leading advocate of “right to die” legislation, did not qualify as euthanasia. Welby died after his physician, responding to his request, removed him from the respirator that kept him alive. His death prompted a heavy new public focus on legal issues involving end-of-life treatment, particularly because an Italian court had earlier rejected Welby’s request for his treatment to be discontinued.

Cardinal Martini told Sole 24 Ore that Welby’s case called for “more attentive pastoral consideration.” That remarks was generally interpreted by Italian reporters as a veiled criticism of the Rome diocese for denying permission for a church funeral for Welby. Church officials had taken pains to say that the decision was based on Welby’s long public advocacy of euthanasia, rather than the difficult circumstances surrounding his death.

Cardinal Martini, long seen as a leading spokesman for liberal Catholicism in Europe, retired in 2002 as Archbishop of Milan. The Jesuit prelate is now living in Jerusalem.