
Portugal: Supreme Court, euthanasia law ruled unconstitutional. Bishops welcome the news, “assisted suicide contrary to human dignity”

“The Portuguese Bishops’ Conference welcomes the Constitutional Court’s ruling that declared unconstitutional the law passed by the Assembly of the Republic introducing euthanasia and assisted suicide”. The Portuguese Bishops wrote this in response to the judgement issued by the country’s highest constitutional body seized by the president of the Portuguese Republic on 18 February for a “preliminary opinion” on the wording of the law approved by Parliament on 29 January. The Court’s ruling, published yesterday, 15 March, insists on the “excessively imprecise nature of the concept of unbearable suffering” and “of the concept of severe irreversible damage”, the detailed judgement reads. The Court argues that “the conditions under which the medically assisted anticipation of death is allowed must be clear, precise, clearly envisioned and controllable”. There is therefore a problem in the wording of the law. For this reason, the Bishops’ Conference reaffirmed “the position taken by the Church throughout the whole process, reiterating that human life is inviolable” and that “any legalization of euthanasia and assisted suicide is always contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic”. President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa hence vetoed the law, which was sent back to Parliament.

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