New Apostolic Church International

New Apostolic Church: Statements on euthanasia and palliative medicine

Zurich. “Every human being has the right to die with dignity.” This sentence is a central element of many human societies. And it is also this statement that introduces a new paper by the New Apostolic Church on a difficult subject.

Medical and technological progress goes hand in hand with increased human life expectancy. In any case, this is a growing development in many countries. One consequence of this is a clear increase in age-related diseases, such as dementia, along with an increase in the need for elder care. It is not least of all because of these developments that the issue of dying has become the focus of public dialogue surrounding human dignity and the individual’s right to self-determination. And in this discussion, the various views on what constitutes a humane death are very different. What some consider beneficial is considered detrimental by others.

Self-determination must not contradict divine commandments

Modern societies allow for a high degree of freedom of decision. For the individual, however, this freedom also results in increasing social pressure to take on personal responsibility and express one’s will. Even Christians will be confronted directly or indirectly with the various options and facets of assistance in, and for, dying. According to the Christian perspective, however, whatever the demands with respect to human dignity or the right of the individual may be, they are not to contradict divine commandments.

A reference guide for Christians

With reference to euthanasia and palliative medicine, the new paper by the New Apostolic Church begins by discussing whether the various measures are actually the cause of death, and goes on to describe the possibilities for providing palliative care to the dying, explain terms, and address ethical considerations. This is followed by Christian perspectives on the subject, thoughts for pastoral care, as well as a position of the New Apostolic Church.

Since dying is a highly individual matter, these statements are formulated as guiding thoughts.

» To the paper on Euthanasia and Palliative Medicine

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