

POPE'S RESILIENCY ANGERS NEWSWEEK

In the March 7 edition of *Newsweek*, there was an article in the "Periscope" section by Christopher Dickey on the health of Pope John Paul II titled, "He Has Willpower—But No 'Living Will.'"

In the article, Dickey (who did the piece with Robert Blair Kaiser) wrote, "Even as the aged pope's body shuts down in the late stages of Parkinson's disease, his will to live—and to impose his will on the Roman Catholic faithful—remains as stubborn as ever." He later wrote that if the pope were to slip into a coma, "Could anyone—would anyone—pull the plug?"

We weren't amused, and thus released the following remarks to the media:

"When presidents like Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Delano Roosevelt continue in office despite poor health, they are regarded as courageous, even heroic. But not Pope John Paul II—he has a duty to die. That's because the pope, unlike the presidents, stubbornly imposes his will on the people. What is really astonishing—and maybe Dickey could address this—is the extent to which this dictatorial pope is loved the world over.

"Dickey lets us down when he asks whether someone could pull the plug on the pope. We thought he was smarter than that. It should be obvious—even to someone like Dickey—that any man who can impose his will on 1.1 billion people surely can impose his will on his own doctors. The very idea that this despotic pope has left anything to chance is beyond comprehension. That Dickey can't connect his own dots does not speak well for his intellect, which is why it's time for *Newsweek* to pull the plug on his column."