

Archbishop at odds with Pope over Alfie

By Olivia Rudgard

RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S most senior Catholic cleric is at odds with the Pope over the treatment of Alfie Evans, who died last week.

The Pope previously expressed support for the parents' desire to take their child abroad for treatment, but Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the Archbishop of Westminster, backed the doctors.

He said: "Wisdom enables us to

make decisions based on full information, and many people have taken a stand on Alfie's case in recent weeks who didn't have such information and didn't serve the good of this child."

He told the Polish church's Catholic information agency KAI: "Alder Hey hospital cared for Alfie not for two weeks or two months, but for 18 months, consulting with the world's top specialists - so its doctors' position, that no further medical help could be

given, was very important," he said.

"The Church says very clearly we do not have a moral obligation to continue a severe therapy when it's having no effect, while the Church's catechism also teaches that palliative care, which isn't a denial of help, can be an act of mercy.

"It's very hard to act in a child's best interest when this isn't always as the parents would wish - and this is why a court must decide what's best, not for the parents, but for the child."

1.2.2018 2.5.18