

Catholics, Catholic Institutions and Susan G. Komen

Several U.S. dioceses in recent months, following a pattern that has developed over the past few years, have issued statements urging Catholics and Catholic organizations not to participate in activities sponsored by Susan G. Komen because of Komen's alleged ties to Planned Parenthood. A minority of Komen affiliates sometimes award grants to Planned Parenthood for the specific and sole purpose of breast health services such as mammograms. Quite often, these programs are targeted to low income women who have few if any other alternatives.

The Diocese of Lafayette, Ind., is one of those dioceses. In a statement, the diocese explained its rationale: "Due to its policy allowing affiliates to offer financial support to abortion providing facilities, its endorsement of embryonic stem cell research, and the continued denial that abortion may well lead to the development of breast cancer, it is not appropriate for Catholics to participate." The statement goes on to say that "donors cannot control how an organization designates its funds. Therefore, money donated for a specific service, i.e., breast health care, directly frees up funds to support other areas of an organization's agenda, i.e., abortion" (for the full statement, see www.dioceseoflafayette.org/offices/pofl/pofl%20pro-life.html). Interestingly, there is no Komen affiliate in Indiana that funds Planned Parenthood.

In March, the St. Louis Archdiocese reiterated its opposition to Komen-related activities and urged members of the archdiocese not to support them. Its

rationale is the same as that of the Lafayette Diocese. Komen affiliates in Missouri have not funded any Planned Parenthood grants. In February, the Diocese of Little Rock, Ark., issued a statement discouraging its parishes, schools and other ministries from donating to Susan G. Komen or taking part in the Race for the Cure and other activities for the same reasons cited by other dioceses. None of the three Komen affiliates in Arkansas has awarded grants to Planned Parenthood. Ironically, the Komen Little Rock affiliate has given out \$1.35 million in grants to Catholic hospitals in its area and the Ozark affiliate has given \$350,000 to Catholic hospitals in that area.

Approximately a month after issuing the statement, following conversations with representatives from Susan G. Komen, the administrator of the Little Rock Diocese issued another statement essentially retracting the earlier one. In his new statement, the diocesan administrator writes: "It is important that the stance of the Catholic Church always be based upon truth. The position statement issued on February 7 was based upon unintentional error. To let that statement stand would be an act of injustice. With apologies to Komen, to those fighting breast cancer and to the survivors, to the Catholic clergy and faithful who were embarrassed by this mistaken policy, I rescind the position statement in its entirety." He concludes his statement by offering "a sincere apology for the unintended turmoil and misunderstanding created by the statement that has now been rescinded" (for the entire text, see www.dolr.org/offices/respectlifekomenstatement.php).

In 2007, 19 of 122 Komen affiliates made grants to Planned Parenthood specifically for breast health services. The grants accounted for approximately 0.54 percent of the \$69.6 million given out through its grant program. The Komen Foundation itself has no ties with Planned Parenthood.

For an ethical analysis of Catholic health care organization's collaborating with philanthropic organizations, see Ron Hamel and Michael Panicola, "Cooperating with Philanthropic Organizations: How to Assess the Moral Permissibility of a Catholic Health Care Organization's Involvement," *Health Progress* 89, no. 2 (March-April 2008): 49-55.

Emergency Contraception

The controversy over emergency contraception (EC) for victims of sexual assault continues to be played out in various forums, including in the literature and in legislatures. In the latter, the central issue is the inclusion of a conscience clause provision in proposed legislation that would require hospitals to provide EC to women who have been raped. The concern for Catholic hospitals is that they will be forced to provide a medication that actually does or can have an abortifacient effect. While this is not an immediate problem because levonorgestrel (or Plan B) does not seem to have such an effect, it could become a problem if other medications are used that clearly do have such an effect, such as RU486 (which is sometimes advocated in the medical literature). In some states, such as Connecticut and Wisconsin, legislation