

WELCOME TO OUR SCRAPBOOK

We've come to think of this issue of *Health Progress* as a scrapbook of sorts, reflecting in bits and pieces where Catholic health care is today. Review it. It's a collection for now and for the future. We predict it will be one to return to over time, useful for scholars studying Catholic health care's history and for all who have lived through this exciting era and may want to look back on the journey. The pages are replete with fascinating questions for business leaders and theologians, sure to provoke stimulating debate for many years ahead.



**PAMELA
SCHAEFFER**

Our writers tell stories of new sponsorship models, business models, partnerships. They review the thinking behind some major shifts, such as the altered governance structure that prompted one of the country's largest Catholic systems, Catholic Healthcare West, to change its name to Dignity Health. They point to where mission is headed today: outside the walls, to far-flung places, according to an in-depth report on mission expansion at Catholic Health Initiatives. And some suggest that the rush to form new partnerships may be as much a call for caution as for celebration.

Although the issue focuses mostly on the present, we allowed space for a brief look back. Sr. Doris Gottmoeller, RSM, in "The Vision of Vatican II," reviews key teachings of a major event that changed so much in church history. No longer, the council documents said, were charisms to be considered the purview of religious congregations. Rather, Catholics were to recognize that charisms, gifts of the Spirit, are widely distributed among the faithful throughout the church. As Sr. Gottmoeller notes, it is hard to overestimate the significance of this new understanding. It enabled Catholic sisters, priests and brothers to confidently transfer authority for their institutions in education and health care to lay leadership as memberships of religious congregations declined.

Today, much is changing again, bringing new questions to the forefront and pressing Catholic health care organizations to find new ways of living out their Catholicity. How to do this is a question each system must answer for itself, in conversation with the church, as new structures and collaborations form, but clearly, the evolution is pushing against theological boundaries that have traditionally framed Catholic health care.

For example, a CHA white paper — its official summary is reprinted here — proposes exploring new theological territory in three areas: 1) whether the principle of moral cooperation is consistent with evolving Vatican II theology and recent papal teachings; 2) whether both for-profit and nonprofit health care organizations might better reflect Catholic social teaching and the call to serve the common good; 3) what it means for Catholic health care to be "in communion with" the Catholic Church. Canon lawyer Fr. Francis Morrissey, OMI, proposes reviewing the distinction in Catholic canon law between Catholic works and works of Catholics, with an eye to which best applies to Catholic health care going forward. He reiterates a concern that too much defensiveness around certain church positions could force Catholic health care and its critical, historic mission off the playing field.

For some it's a scary time; for some it's exciting. Either way, as Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM, points out in her introduction, for all who care about the future of the ministry, it's a risky, game-changing time.

Meanwhile, as we were compiling this scrapbook for readers, our new Pope Francis — was he looking over Sr. Haddad's shoulder as she wrote? — echoed her cautionary thoughts. The Spirit, he said in his homily at Mass on June 12, 2013, calls us to "continuous discernment to do the will of God," which can set us on a scary path and tempt us to say, OK, we'll go just so far, but beyond that, "it's impossible." This is a fear of freedom, he warned, which amounts to a denial of the Spirit. On the other hand, too readily adapting to a changing culture smacks of "adolescent progressivism" and could cause us, like a car moving too fast on ice, to slip off the road.

In other words, Catholic health care, if it is to follow where the Spirit leads, must move forward with courage and discernment, neither hitting the brakes nor rushing mindlessly ahead.

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