



The Roman Catholic
Diocese of Phoenix NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement of the Diocese of Phoenix
Re: Situation at St. Joseph's Hospital

PHOENIX (May 14, 2010) — The Most Rev. Thomas J. Olmsted, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Phoenix, released the following statement today in response to the acknowledgement by officials at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center to the media that an unborn child was killed several months ago at St. Joseph's through a direct abortion:

"I am gravely concerned by the fact that an abortion was performed several months ago in a Catholic hospital in this Diocese. I am further concerned by the hospital's statement that the termination of a human life was necessary to treat the mother's underlying medical condition.

"An unborn child is not a disease. While medical professionals should certainly try to save a pregnant mother's life, the means by which they do it can never be by directly killing her unborn child. The end does not justify the means.

"Every Catholic institution is obliged to defend human life at all its stages; from conception to natural death. This obligation is also placed upon every Catholic individual. If a Catholic formally cooperates in the procurement of an abortion, they are automatically excommunicated by that action. The Catholic Church will continue to defend life and proclaim the evil of abortion without compromise, and must act to correct even her own members if they fail in this duty.

"We always must remember that when a difficult medical situation involves a pregnant woman, there are two patients in need of treatment and care; not merely one. The unborn child's life is just as sacred as the mother's life, and neither life can be preferred over the other. A woman is rightly called 'mother' upon the moment of conception and throughout her entire pregnancy is considered to be 'with child.'

"The direct killing of an unborn child is always immoral, no matter the circumstances, and it cannot be permitted in any institution that claims to be authentically Catholic.

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“As our late Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, solemnly taught in his encyclical “The Gospel of Life,” a ‘direct abortion, that is, abortion willed as an end or as a means, always constitutes a grave moral disorder, since it is the deliberate killing of an innocent human being’ (The Gospel of Life #62).

“The Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Healthcare Institutions (ERDs) are very clear on this issue: ‘Catholic health care ministry witnesses to the sanctity of life from the moment of conception until death. The Church’s defense of life encompasses the unborn and the care of women and their children during and after pregnancy.’” (ERD, Part Four, Introduction) The ERDs further state that ‘Abortion (that is, the directly intended termination of pregnancy before viability or the directly intended destruction of a viable fetus) is never permitted. Every procedure whose sole immediate effect is the termination of pregnancy before viability is an abortion. ... Catholic health care institutions are not to provide abortion services, even based upon the principle of material cooperation. In this context, Catholic health care institutions need to be concerned about the danger of scandal in any association with abortion providers.’” (ERD 45)

Bishop Olmsted, by virtue of his office, is the authoritative voice on faith and morals in the Diocese of Phoenix. This includes every official Catholic institution of the Diocese.

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