

tidings!

January, 2009

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

February 3, 2009

JRLC Day on the Hill
State Capitol, St. Paul
FFI: (612)870-3670

February 11, 2009

World Day of the Sick

February 25, 2009

CHA-MN Board Meeting
Carondelet Center, St. Paul
FFI: (651)503-2163

March 22-28, 2009

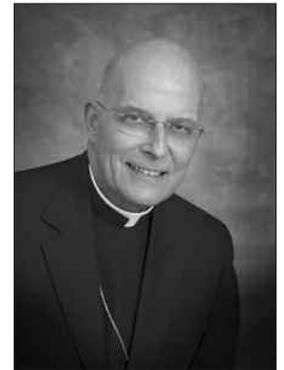
Cover the Uninsured Week
FFI: www.covertheuninsured.org

June 7-9, 2009

2009 CHA Health Assembly
New Orleans, LA
FFI: www.chausa.org

Dignitas Personae

Vatican Instruction on Bioethics, Welcomed for Guidance on Issues of Procreation, Medical Research



Cardinal Francis George

Dignitas Personae (The Dignity of a Person), an Instruction from the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) on ethical issues arising from biomedical research, provides guidance on how to respect human life and human procreation in our heavily scientific age, said Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"We welcome the Instruction as theologians, medical personnel, researchers and married couples consider new scientific and medical procedures that

have profound ethical implications bearing upon the procreation of children and the integrity of marriage," Cardinal George said in a December 12 statement. "We applaud developments which advance medical progress with respect for the sanctity of human life from the moment of conception," he said. "We oppose discarding or manipulating innocent lives to benefit future generations, or promoting the creation of new human life in depersonalized ways that substitute for the loving union between a husband and wife."

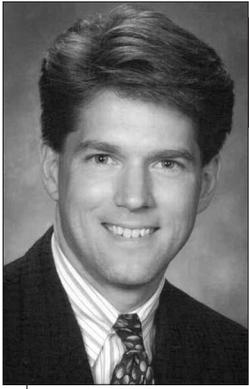
Dignitas Personae can be found at www.usccb.org/comm/Dignitaspersonae/.

Cardinal George pointed out that the document defends again the life of unborn human beings, created like all other people in the image of God. The Instruction notes that "behind every 'no' in the difficult task of discerning between good and evil, there shines a great 'yes' to the recognition of the dignity and inalienable value of every single and unique human being called into existence."

Cardinal George also noted that

Behind every 'no' in the difficult task of discerning between good and evil, there shines a great 'yes' to the recognition of the dignity and inalienable value of every single and unique human being called into existence.

Ethics *cont. on page 7*



Toby Pearson,
CHA-MN
Executive Director

As I See It

Back in Session, we need to examine our principles.

“That which you did to the least amongst you, you did to me.” (Mt. 25:40)

State legislators returned to St. Paul this past week to convene the 2009 legislative Session. The 2009 Minnesota Legislature began with a ceremonial afternoon of roll calls and leadership elections. House Leadership includes Speaker of the House Representative Margaret Anderson Kelliher (DFL-Minneapolis), House Majority Leader Tony Sertich (DFL-Chisholm), and House Minority Leader Marty Seifert (R-Marshall). Senate Leadership includes Senate Majority Leader Larry Pogemiller (DFL-Minneapolis), and Senate Minority Leader David Senjem (R-Rochester).

Senator Senjem announced that the 2009 Session could prove to be "historic, epic, even cataclysmic." Legislators have been hard at work, looking to solve a record, and rising \$4.8 billion general fund deficit projected for the 2010-11 biennium. A bipartisan effort is on the rise to reconcile the budget shortfall while the economy is already struggling, and while everything from healthcare, road projects, schools, prisons, and local government aid are all facing major cuts.

“That which

In light of this epic, even cataclysmic budget deficit, that will rise by the February forecast, the Catholic Health Association continues to advocate for policies that are consistent with our principles.

WHAT WE BELIEVE.

Our advocacy is grounded in the values that drive each of our organizations. Our ethical standards in health care flow from the Catholic Church's teachings about the dignity of the human person and the sanctity of human life from conception to natural death. We are committed to ensuring that our advocacy efforts help to maintain our Catholic identity and to preserve the Catholic health ministry. We must always maintain our preferential option for the poor.

We believe that health care is a basic right. The Catholic health ministry encourages a dialogue and public policies with the goal of providing affordable and accessible health care for all.

We maintain a steadfast commitment to issues with compelling moral implications, such as preserva-

tion of conscience clause protections, ethical issues surrounding genetics advancements, and care of persons at the end of life.

We recognize that health care is foremost a service, not a commodity. This conviction guides our efforts to address issues related to quality, patient safety, and environmental responsibility.

Our priorities for the 2009 Legislative Session are what follows.

Above all, the Catholic health ministry is committed to health care that works for everyone, including the uninsured and underinsured individuals in our midst. We are committed to ensuring that the health care system provides high quality, safe services across the broad continuum of health care delivery. While we work to build the momentum to achieve this goal, we also will take a leadership role on

issues of particular importance to the Catholic health ministry and work as partners with other organizations to advance common objectives.

Catholic teaching proclaims

that a basic moral test of society is how its most vulnerable members are faring. We are called to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first. We believe political institutions should craft just and fair policies, providing access to basic necessities.

In this time of budget deficit we must reflect on the words of the Gospel....that which you did to the least amongst you, you did to me. And then decide how to balance the budget. ■

*That which you did
to the least amongst
you, you did to me.”*

Villa St. Vincent Achieves Step III Award

Villa St. Vincent of Crookston, Minnesota reaped national recognition for their exceptional commitment to quality care at the recent annual American Health Care Association (AHCA) and National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL) annual conference in Nashville.

The AHCA/NCAL Awards consist of an entry level, Step I Award, a more rigorous Step II Award, and a final Step III Award that mirrors the Baldrige National Quality Award criteria. Out of the 647 applications received from four categories of long term care providers in 47 states, 315 facilities received awards.

Villa St. Vincent, Crookston was honored for reaching the highest level of performance excellence, the Step III Award, a level that only five other facilities in the nation have achieved to date. Madonna Living Community, Rochester, which consists of two campuses – Madonna Towers of Rochester and Madonna Meadows of Rochester – joined 23 others nationwide who attained a Step II Award this year.

“Recipients of our Quality Award reflect the long term care profession’s commitment to meeting the customers’ needs through a process of continuous quality improvement,” said Bruce Yarwood, president, AHCA/NCAL. “Recipients of this prestigious award know that the pursuit of excellence is a continuous journey, and that the satisfaction of residents, families and staff makes the journey worthwhile.”

The AHCA/NCAL Quality Award was created in 1996 and is part of the AHCA/NCAL’s extensive quality program. Step I awardees develop solid vision and mission statements, and an awareness of their environment and customers’ expectations. Recipients at the Step II level address their approaches to the core values and concepts of visionary leadership, focus on the future, resident-focused excellence, management by fact, organizational and personal learning, valu-



Step III AHCA/NCAL Quality Award, presented Patti Cullen, president/CEO of Care Providers of Minnesota presented to Mike Siekas, Wendell Johnson and Judy Hulst. (Photo by Natalie J. Ostgaard)

ing staff and partners, systems perspective and innovation, and focus on results and creating value.

The Step III category addresses the Baldrige National Quality Award criteria in its entirety, specifically their achievement of superior results through their approaches and integration of the seven major categories of leadership; strategic planning, focus on customers, measurement, analysis and knowledge management, workforce focus process management and results.

“We are proud of our facilities’ quality improvement efforts,” said Dale Thompson, BHS president/CEO. “They have fully embraced quality improvement as a way to further the BHS Mission and Core Values of Hospitality, Stewardship, Respect and Justice in serving the resi-

dents in our care.”

Villa Administrator Judy Hulst pointed out that the award really goes to the facility’s many employees, as it would not have been possible without them.

Retired Administrator Mike Siekas said high-quality employees and the work environment there, along with dedicated volunteers, residents and their families, and board are all to thank for the award. The Villa has a number of long-term employees, he noted, and estimated the average length of employment there to be around 14 years. ■

Led By Prophets: JRLC Day on the Hill

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2009, ST. PAUL
RIVERCENTRE AND STATE CAPITOL**

Join the largest interfaith lobbying day in the state with Joint Religious Legislative Coalition Day on the Hill. Keynote speaker Dr. Ingrid Mattson, President of the Islamic Society of North America and Professor at Hartford Seminary, is a scholar on poverty and Islamic law and an inspiring voice for social justice. For more information contact Jody at (612) 230-3233. ■

Field Raises \$20,000 in Dreams for Surgery Project

This past December, with the hint of winter in the air, area farmers worked overtime to gather their harvests before fields were covered in a blanket of fresh, white snow. At this same time, a crew converged in Wabasha on Saint Elizabeth Medical Center's "Field of Dreams" to pick this season's corn crop, which was expected to be a cash cow for Saint Elizabeth's Surgery Department. Estimates suggest the crop will yield close to \$20,000.

The Field of Dreams, now in its tenth season, has grown into a unique rural collaboration. Generous contributions of seed, fertilizer, herbicides, labor, and equipment from area farmers have realized many dreams. The dollars raised from this partnership have supported significant capital improvements and technological advancements. Last year, the project raised \$18,000 for digital mammography.



This year's harvest will help fund the addition of two state-of-the-art surgery suites.

The project's success is credited in large

part to the Wabasha area farming community. Jim and Kathy Schurhammer, Tony Wallerich, Gene and John Marx, and many others donated their goods and services to ensure another profitable season for the medical center.

"Jake Abbott also needs to be commended for his support of the Field of Dreams," says Administrator Tom Crowley. "The farmers appointed Jake to the position of farm manager. It was his vision that fueled the idea for this exceptional fundraising project. Over the years the harvest of corn and beans has raised thousands of dollars for Saint Elizabeth's. We're grateful for the ongoing support and hard work of our farmers." The fields surrounding Saint Elizabeth's now lay dormant for a long winter respite. But rest assured, as spring comes knocking on our door new seeds will be sown and more dreams will come true. ■

World Day of the Sick Feb. 11, 2009

Since 1992, the Catholic Church has celebrated World Day of the Sick on February 11 — the day on which the church commemorates the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes — under the sponsorship of the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care. World Day of the Sick has three consistent themes. First, it reminds the faithful to pray intensely and sincerely for those who are sick. Second, the celebration invites Christians to reflect on and respond to human suffering. And third, this day recognizes and honors all persons who work in health care and serve as caregivers. ■



Msgr James Habiger and Sr. Mary Madonna Ashton enjoying breakfast at the Annual Meeting.



Participants engaged between presentations at the Meeting.

Images from the 2008 CHA-MN Annual Meeting

The Catholic Health Association met on October 28, 2008 for their annual membership meeting at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Edina. The day was highlighted by a presentation and discussion with Fr. Jan Michael Joncas. ■



Brian Rusche, JRLC, presenting at the Annual Meeting

Amazing Grace:
Suffering, Healing, and Transformation

Catholic Health Association of MN
29 October 2008
Fr. Jan Michael Joncas



Sr. Mary Heinen, Past-President, welcoming participants.

Fr. Jan Michael Joncas, keynote presenter at the Annual Meeting.



Catholic Health Association Statement Regarding Proposed Freedom of Choice Legislation

Sister Carol Keehan, DC, president and chief executive officer of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), issued the following statement.

The proposed Freedom of Choice (FOCA) legislation has been introduced for a number of years in Congress. CHA has always opposed it and will continue to oppose it.

There are some who suggest it may pass and be signed into law in 2009. In addition to the basic pro-abortion thrust of the potential law, some have questioned its impact on Catholic hospitals and others have questioned what should be our response. What should be our response if it is likely the bill will pass?

As people of faith, the first thing we are called to do is redouble our efforts to be sure pregnant women do not see abortion as their only option.

Has our belief in their dignity and that of their unborn child led us to create easily accessible and high quality obstetrical care? Have we set up programs that help them with food stamps, housing, education and child care? Can they readily see that our belief in their dignity and their child's dignity causes us to spend our time and treasure helping them not only bear a child but to raise that child in an environment worthy of a child of God?

Those who work in pregnancy crisis centers and post-abortion counseling centers continually report that so many women get abortions not because they are pro-choice but because they feel they have no choice.

Catholic health care, working with the Catholic community, local governments and others of goodwill, has developed in many areas wonderful programs that assist women and children. Now is the time to be sure we have effective programs in every community and that they are well known. How horrible it would be for a mother, who had an abortion because she thought she had no other option, to say "If only I had known."



Sister Carol Keehan, DC,
President/CEO, CHA

As for the impact on Catholic hospitals, we expect that, even if this bad legislation were to pass, we would not be forced to participate, and we will fight for that. Even with strong conscience protection in the legislation, we will still oppose the bill.

Some have postulated that we might not get conscience protection and what impact that might have on Catholic hospitals. Catholic hospitals are a national treasure, one out of every six Americans hospitalized in this country is cared for in a Catholic hospital. We are a major part of the safety net for the uninsured. In many communities, we are the only health facility.

We in Catholic health care are not going to dismantle that or compromise our principles. We have many examples in this country of how to respond to unjust laws, and we have learned from them. We will protect Catholic health care in this country without compromising our position on abortion. ■

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*We will protect
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WHAT IS THIS NEW DOCUMENT ON BIOETHICS THAT HAS JUST BEEN RELEASED BY THE CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH AND WHY WAS IT WRITTEN?

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) has responsibility for addressing issues of faith and morals. Because of the ethical issues associated with emerging reproductive technologies, the CDF issued a document in 1987 called Donum Vitae ("The Gift of Life") to offer guidance with regard to these technological developments. In the twenty plus years since that document was published, medical science has advanced, presenting new and ever-

Talking Points on Dignitas Personae

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ers new developments in science and medicine in light of the Church's commitment to promoting and protecting human life and dignity.

WHO WILL BE AFFECTED BY THIS DOCUMENT?

As the CDF states in the Introduction, the document is aimed at "the Catholic faithful and to all who seek the

Talking Points cont. on page 8

Ethics *cont. from page 1*

Dignitas Personae approves fertility treatments that "succeed in re-establishing the normal function of human procreation" as well as "stem cell research and therapies that respect the inherent dignity of the human person." He also noted the Instruction's encouragement for assisting infertile couples through both adoption and research into infertility.

The Instruction also considers the challenge faced by researchers and families arising from the proposed use of unethically obtained cells and tissues, for example, in making vaccines. It states that researchers have a duty to distance themselves and their work from unjust situations created by others and to affirm the inviolable dignity of human life.

"Grave reasons may be morally proportionate to justify the use of such 'biological material,'" the Instruction states, however. "Thus, for example, danger to the health of children could permit parents to use a vaccine which was developed using cell lines of illicit origin, while keeping in mind that everyone has the duty to make known their disagreement and to ask their healthcare system to make other types of vaccine available."

The Vatican Instruction, dated September 8 but released December 12, highlights "some anthropological, theological and ethical elements of fundamental importance" as well as "new problems regarding procreation" and "new procedures involving the manipulation of embryos and the human genetic patrimony." It builds upon *Donum vitae*, the 1987 CDF instruction on reproductive technologies and embryo experimentation, and discusses more fully the threat of human cloning.

Other issues discussed in *Dignitas Personae* include:

- Embryo adoption. The document does not reject the practice outright but warns of medical, psychological and legal problems associated with it and underscores the moral wrong of producing and freezing embryos in the first place. "Cryopreservation is incompatible with the respect owed to human embryos," the Instruction states.
- Pre-implantation drugs and devices. Knowledge of the mode of action of some of these drugs offered to prevent pregnancy is incomplete. Nonetheless, prescribing and using them in order to prevent the implantation and therefore survival of any embryo involves the sin of abortion.

- Gene therapy. "Somatic cell" gene therapy (correcting a specific genetic defect in the cells of an individual patient) raises the same basic issues of risk and benefit as other medical techniques, though "procedures used on somatic cells for strictly therapeutic purposes are in principle morally licit," the Instruction states. However, the Instruction raises special caution about "germ line" gene therapy (which would affect all of a person's cells, including reproductive cells, and therefore affect future generations). Human germ line therapy is not acceptable "in its current state," due to its massive and unpredictable risks and its need to manipulate human embryos in the laboratory.

"It is not morally permissible to act in a way that may cause possible harm to the resulting progeny," the Instruction states.

- Genetic enhancement/designer babies. Beyond the medical risks involved, the Instruction warns against an attitude of dissatisfaction with finite human nature as created, a "eugenic mentality" that would drive new divisions between groups of human beings, the arbitrary and questionable criteria some would use to decide what a "better" human being is, and an ideology that seeks to take over God's role in creation. The Instruction says that "in stating the ethical negativity of these kinds of interventions which imply an unjust domination of man over man, the church also recalls the need to return to an attitude of care for people and of education in accepting human life in its concrete historical finite nature."
- Human/animal hybrid embryos. The Instruction rejects attempts to create such hybrids (including the use of animal eggs in attempts at human cloning), noting that "from an ethical standpoint such procedures represent an offense against the dignity of human beings on account of the admixture of human and genetic elements capable of disrupting the specific identity of man." The Instruction concludes by explaining the positive vision of human progress that grounds its moral judgments against specific abuses of biotechnology. Through modern science and technology, the Instruction says, the human person "participates in the creative power of God and is called to transform creation" in service to "the dignity and wellbeing of all human beings and of the human person in his entirety." ■

MISSION:

BELIEVING IN THE WORTH AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON MADE IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD, THE CATHOLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION-MINNESOTA ASSISTS ITS MEMBERS TO FULFILL THE HEALING MISSION OF THE CHURCH.



Catholic Health Association of Minnesota
P.O. Box 65217
St. Paul, MN 55165-0217

INQUIRING MINDS *want to know...*

...what's happening in your organization. Please send your news to Toby Pearson, CHA-MN executive director. Telephone: (651) 503-2163; e-mail: tpearson@chamn.org. Ask your public relations or communications director to put us on the news release list: CHA-MN, P.O. Box 65217, St. Paul, MN 55165. ■

New Board Member

A special welcome to Colleen Hegranes who was recently elected to serve a three year term on the CHA-MN Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting on October 29, 2008. Colleen currently serves as the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul. ■



Talking Points *cont. from page 6*

truth." Because of the content of the document, those most likely to be affected are Catholic couples and clinicians especially fertility specialists and geneticists, as well as researchers. The document is unlikely to have much of an impact on Catholic hospitals because these hospitals do not employ the procedures addressed in the document.

For a complete set of talking points, visit www.chausa.org ■

Catholic Health Association of Minnesota Board of Directors

Ms. Phyllis Novitskie, President
HealthEast St. Joseph's Hospital
(651) 232-3434; pnovitskie@healtheast.org

Mr. Bret Reuter, President-Elect
St. Cloud Hospital/St. Benedict's Senior Community
(320) 251-2700; ReuterB@centracare.com

Sr. Mary Heinen, CSJ, Past-President
St. Mary's Health Clinics, St. Paul
(651) 690-7028

Mr. Mark Cairns, Secretary-Treasurer
Madonna Towers of Rochester
(507) 288-3911; mcairns@bhshealth.org

Sr. Mary Eliot Crowley, OSF
St. Marys Hospital-Mayo Clinic
(507) 255-6166; mecrowley@mayo.edu

Mr. Thomas Crowley
St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Wabasha
(612) 565-4531; stetomc@wabasha.net

Ms. Colleen Hegranes
College of St. Catherine, St. Paul
(651)690-6501

Mr. Lee Larson
St. Gertrude's Health Center, Shakopee
(952) 233-4408; lee.larson@bhshealth.org

Mr. Chris Leifeld (ex-officio)
Minnesota Catholic Conference, St. Paul
(651) 227-8777; cleifeld@mnc.org

Mr. David Nelson
St. Francis Medical Center, Breckenridge
(218) 643-3000; davidnelson@catholichealth.net

Ms. Kathy Tomlin
Catholic Charities – St. Paul/Mpls
(651)291-4537; ktomlin@osjpm.org