

Supporting decisions for life

By Bishop Matthew H. Clark

In recent weeks, there has been much discussion in the Rochester area about the relationship between the United Way and Planned Parenthood. That discussion was generated by Planned Parenthood's decision to investigate the possibility of opening an abortion clinic in Rochester.

When that announcement was made, United Way's Board of Directors decided to change Planned Parenthood's status to "Donor Choice." Under that arrangement, Planned Parenthood would receive only those United Way funds that were specifically directed to it by donors. Planned Parenthood would not participate in the general-allocation process.

United Way made that determination because it judged that Planned Parenthood's decision about an abortion clinic and public reaction to that decision would depress United Way's fundraising capacity, thereby harming the work of many agencies that participate in the United Way.

While United Way continued to meet with Planned Parenthood to find a better solution, strong public reaction on both sides of the issue became evident. So strong was the controversy that it gave rise to fears that the United Way's ability to serve the community in its usual fashion was strongly threatened. As a result of that concern, United Way and Planned Parenthood met to shape an agreement that would advance a settlement of the controversy and allow everyone to participate in the United Way in good conscience.

One part of the agreement reached by the United Way and Planned Parenthood maintains Planned Parenthood's original status in the



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United Way. The second part of the agreement segregates any abortion service from direct or indirect participation in funds raised through United Way. Under the terms of the agreement, the proposed clinic — if it should come into being — will have a separate advisory board, a separate name, separate phone listing, separate bank accounts and an independent audit.

Audits of each set of accounts would be performed by independent auditing firms, and both sets will be provided to United Way allocations volunteers for review. A separate advisory board would be established to monitor the activities of the clinic and ensure that no United Way funds are used for the clinic. Failure to comply with the agreement would result in severe penalties. My understanding is that, at this writing, further controls are being developed by which compliance with the terms of this agreement will be carefully monitored.

In addition to these structural protections put in place to segregate abortion service from any direct or indirect United Way funding, the individual donor to United Way has two donor options at her or his disposal. One option allows a donor to block a particular agency from receiving any portion of his or her donations. A second option allows a donor to direct her or his donation to a particular agency.

I present this to you to provide a context within which to make the following statements:

1) I encourage Catholics of the region to continue participating generously in the United Way. Doing so provides much-needed support to a wide variety of agencies serving those among us who stand in special need.

2) Given the agreement mentioned above, the safeguards in place to monitor its observance, and the options available to donors, it is my conviction that Catholics can contribute to United Way and be in conformity with the moral teaching of our tradition.

As a postlude to these two statements, I want to tell you that I have wrestled with this issue as a man, as a bishop of the Roman Catholic Church, and as a fledgling member of the United Way Board. Under all of those hats, I am deeply opposed to abortion because I believe it to be an assault on innocent and defenseless human life. And I am committed to do all that I can to protect that life.

What I want to say to you here is that to boycott the United Way will do nothing to turn the tide of abortions. But it will lessen the capacity of our community to provide the kind of care and support that encourages people to make good decisions for life.

I thank you for considering these thoughts. Peace to all.

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**Easter
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Sunday
April 19, 1992

This Easter Sunday, the Greenhouse Cafe has prepared a spectacular Brunch. Fresh Seasonal Salad Bar, Fresh Fruit, Fresh Baked Breads and Pastries. Entrees include: Made-to-order Waffles and Omelettes and Roast Leg of Lamb, Roast Pork, Chicken Champagne, Baron of Beef and much, much more. Select from our irresistible Dessert Table and Ice Cream Cart.

Kids of all ages will enjoy a visit from the Easter Bunny. Reservations are recommended. Large and small parties are welcome. Private rooms available for larger groups. Prices are \$14.95 Adult, \$11.95 Senior, \$7.95 Children 6-12; Free under 5.

Brunch served 11:00 am to 5:00 pm.

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