

H · e · a · l · t · h

Hospital is pro-family, supportive

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (CNS) — For St. Thomas Hospital in Nashville, initiatives that support employees and their family life stem from a sense of what a Catholic hospital is called to do, according to its CEO.

"At St. Thomas, it's really a justice issue," John Tighe, top executive at the Daughters of Charity hospital, told the *Tennessee Register*, the diocesan paper.

He was among selected corporate leaders who shared strategies for supporting employees and their families during an annual Family Re-Union Conference. It was hosted in Nashville by Vice President Al Gore and his wife, Tipper, and included an address June 24 from President Clinton.

Tighe met business leaders from Marriott International, Merck & Co. Inc., Patagonia Inc., Starbucks Coffee Company and other participants to discuss ways to enhance the workplace.

"I found I was able to share that what we're doing is a ministry and this work is the work of Jesus Christ," he told the *Register*. "It's what we're called to do as the health ministry of the diocese. We're called as Catholics to live to that standard."

The hospital offers flexible work schedules, an adoption benefit, "Learning for Life" adult education and English as a second language programs, child care, scholarship program, and parenting and budgeting classes.

Physicians study ethical teachings

By Rob Cullivan
Staff writer

Dr. Michael Aiello, president of the Catholic Physicians' Guild in the Diocese of Rochester, realized the value of the church's teachings on medical ethics when he attended a recent conference of Christian physicians in Buffalo.

A panel was discussing various end-of-life issues and, it seemed to Aiello, fumbling toward a murky consensus on the issues' ethical dimensions. Aiello, meanwhile, pondered the fact that the church had already dealt with many of these end-of-life issues through encyclicals, pastoral letters and other directives.

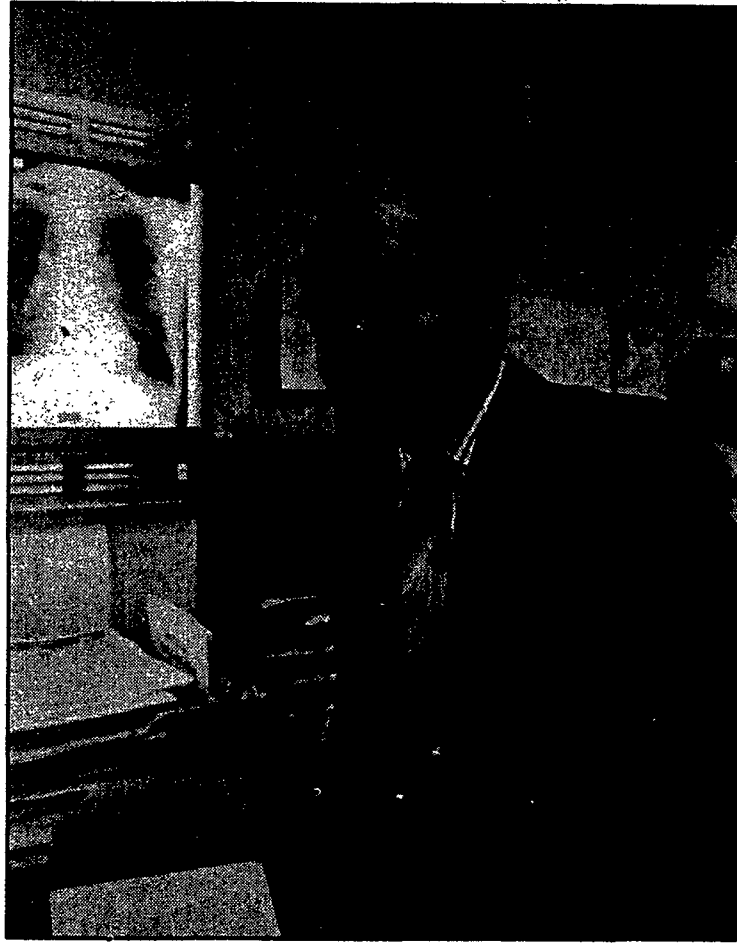
"These people were really trying to discover the wheel," he said. "Using their own intuition, they weren't discovering it."

Catholic physicians and medical-ethics experts say that advances in medical technology and research — combined with such ethically challenging issues as legalized abortion and physician-assisted suicide — have compelled the church in recent decades to promote and expand its stance on medical ethics.

Such encyclicals as Pope Paul VI's *Humanae Vitae* and Pope John Paul II's *Evangelium Vitae* have examined medical issues including artificial contraception and euthanasia, these observers noted. They added that the new Catechism of the Catholic Church also offers counsel on such medical issues as organ transplantation.

In the United States, the Pope John XXIII Center for Medical Moral Research and Education, located in Braintree, Mass., has been studying medical ethics since 1974, according to Father Albert S. Moraczewski, OPM, president emeritus.

The priest, who holds a doctorate in pharmacology, said the center is an independent organi-



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer
Dr. Michael Aiello, shown above and on page 1A, is president of the Catholic Physicians' Guild, which helps Catholic doctors grapple with medical ethics.

zation that was created by the Catholic Health Association, a national organization of Catholic health-care institutions and workers. In a telephone interview from the center's satel-

lite office in St. Louis, Mo., Father Moraczewski explained that the center's purpose is to aid Catholic health-care workers grappling with the growing moral complexity created by

modern medical advances.

In addition to holding ethics seminars and workshops around the country, Father Moraczewski said the Pope John XXIII Center publishes a monthly newsletter called *Ethics and Medics*, which has a circulation of 25,000. Recent issues of the newsletter have examined ethical questions raised by a patient's brain death, human experimentation and research, and the effects of abortion on the aborted child's father.

Although the modern era presents far more challenges — and opportunities — to Catholic health-care workers than any other era in human history, the church continues to base its medical ethics in the ancient Gospels, the priest said. Three basic principles drawn from Scripture form the basis of Catholic ethics in general and, in particular, the basis of Catholic medical ethics, he commented.

Father Moraczewski said the church believes that all human beings were created by God in God's image; all human beings are redeemed by Christ; and all human beings are invited by Christ to live with him in eternity.

Those three points are basic tenets of the Catholic faith. But, Father Moraczewski stressed, the importance of such core beliefs becomes evident when doctors and families face painful de-

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