

PROVINCE POLICY ON CHARITABLE GIVING

Approved by the Bishops of Florida on September 19, 2009

Background:

The Catholic Church and its entities are compelled by the Gospel to be socially responsible stewards who promote the protection of human life and the common good. As our society faces ever more complex technological and bioethical issues, the Florida Bishops have a moral responsibility to shape the dialogue with corporate, bioethical and community organizations engaged in or supporting initiatives that many of our laity endorse "in good faith" but whose mission or affiliation may be morally objectionable or, at least, questionable. The Florida Bishops call upon pastors, clergy and the lay faithful to use guidelines based on the virtue of prudence and justice when making charitable giving decisions.

Church teaching:

All life is sacred and must be protected. This is why we do not support or endorse individuals, companies or organizations whose activities include direct participation in or indirect support of abortion, reproductive/family planning rights, contraception, and embryonic stem cell research.

Guidelines:

When evaluating the appropriateness of making a donation to a community or national foundation, individuals, parishes and Catholic schools are asked to consider whether the organization supports partisan public policy efforts or endorses political party candidates and agendas. The mission of the organization/foundation should be considered as to its consistency with Catholic Church teaching particularly as it pertains to the sacredness and dignity of human life. Parish facilities should not be used to promote, endorse or fundraise for such organizations if their policies are contrary to Church teaching. These include:

UNICEF: The Holy See suspended an annual symbolic contribution in 1996 due to the "shift in UNICEF activities" that were once solely focused on child welfare and now include contraceptive and abortion services to women as well as a lack of accountability to donors who have earmarked their contribution. See:

<http://www.usccb.org/prolife/publicat/lifeinsight/9-1003.shtml>

Amnesty International: In 2007, the Executive Council of Amnesty International (AI) recommended that AI abandon its neutral stance on abortion to a pro-abortion position. See: <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/2007-07ActionAlertA1.shtml>

Crop Walk/Church World Service: CROP Walk, an annual hunger awareness and fundraising effort that benefits many local food pantries, is sponsored by Church World Service (CWS), an agency of the National Council of Churches. Catholic Relief Services withdrew its name from the list of funding recipients since some of the partners of CWS support the provision of contraceptives in their overseas missions and programs and CRS could not guarantee that donations, particularly Catholic donors who have earmarked their contribution to those efforts consistent with Church teaching, would not be utilized for objectionable services.

March of Dimes: A research, education and advocacy organization whose focus is the prevention of birth defects, premature birth and infant mortality. March of Dimes has expressed support for embryonic stem cell research, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis, and advocates for mandatory contraceptive coverage for insurance plans.

Susan G. Komen for the Cure: An organization whose stated goal is "to save lives and end breast cancer forever by empowering people, ensuring quality care for all and energizing science to find the cures." There is documentation of grants made to Planned Parenthood facilities through affiliates sponsoring "Race for the Cure" fundraising activities.

It may be generally advised that only Catholic organizations, entities and others who support Catholic teaching be permitted to utilize parish and diocesan facilities for fundraising purposes. This, however, is strictly determined by the Ordinary of each diocese.

As a general rule, individuals, parishes and Catholic schools should only support those organizations that are listed in the Kennedy Directory.

Alternatives for Charitable Giving

Research:

Mercy Research Institute: <http://www.mercymiami.org/mercy-research-institute/>

National Catholic Bioethics Center: www.ncbcenter.org

Abortion/Breast Cancer Research:

Breast Cancer Prevention Institute: <http://www.bcpinstitute.org/home.htm>

Genetic Research:

The Michael Fund: www.michaelfund.org

International Hunger Relief and Education:

Catholic Relief Services: www.crs.org

Caritas Internationalis: www.caritas.org

Local Food Distribution and Hunger Awareness:

Diocesan Catholic Charities agencies

Catholic Campaign for Human Development: <http://www.usccb.org/about/catholic-campaign-for-human-development/> and www.povertyusa.org

Society of St. Vincent de Paul Friends of the Poor Walk: www.svdpusa.org