

ACLU MYTHS ABOUT CATHOLIC HOSPITALS

A recent article posted on the Medscape website, "ACLU Says Catholic Hospitals Can Not Refuse to Perform Life-Saving Abortions," repeats ACLU myths on this subject. It is written by Arthur L. Caplan, a professor who works in the Division of Medical Ethics at NYU's Langone Medical Center. Caplan agrees with an ACLU lawsuit that seeks to force Catholic hospitals to perform abortions; the hospitals follow the directives of the bishops.

Caplan writes that "The bishops' teaching on this says you still cannot do an abortion, even if the mother's life depends on it." He says that these hospitals should be required to "tell you where else you could go or refer you to places where you might be able to get the service you want, if not there." Catholic teaching is more complicated than this.

It is always wrong to intentionally take the life of an innocent person, beginning with unborn children. But the Catholic doctrine of "double effect" allows for an operation to save the life of the mother even if "the effect" is the death of the child.

Regarding the question of consent, #27 of the "Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services," established by the bishops, says that "informed consent" is key and that the person or the person's surrogate should be appraised of "any reasonable and morally legitimate alternatives, including no treatment at all." It should be noted that just this year, in one of the ACLU's lawsuits attempting to force Catholic hospitals to perform abortions (it lost in federal court), it never mentioned this directive. Why complicate things?

Our most liberal abortion laws in the world are not enough to satisfy the ACLU, or people like Caplan. They want to jam their secular values down the throats of Catholics. And there is no such thing as a “life-saving abortion.” That’s a classic oxymoron.