

SEBELIUS FOR HHS IGNITES PROTEST

When Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius was chosen by the president as his top choice as secretary of health and human services (HHS), it ignited a protest that included her bishop, Joseph Naumann, Archbishop of Kansas City in Kansas, the Catholic League and many pro-life groups, not all of whom were Catholic.

As we pointed out to the media, Sebelius' support for abortion is so far off-the-charts that she has been publicly criticized by the last three archbishops of Kansas City.

In 1992, when Sebelius was a state legislator, Archbishop Ignatius Strecker rebuked her for leading what he dubbed a "death-march of the unborn." When Sebelius became governor in 2003, Archbishop James Keleher, citing her abortion record, asked her to move her inauguration interfaith service from Topeka's Assumption Catholic Church. She refused. And her current archbishop, Joseph Naumann, called her out on the issue: he challenged her to name *one* instance in her long legislative career where she supported limiting abortion rights. She could not. He subsequently asked her not to go to Communion.

Our response was as follows: "None of these archbishops overreacted. Not only does Sebelius support the now outlawed practice of killing babies who are 80 percent born, so-called partial-birth abortion, she has accepted donations from one of the most notorious practitioners of this Nazi-style act—Dr. George Tiller. Moreover, she even hosted a dinner for him in the Governor's Mansion."

Tiller, by the way, boasts of performing over 60,000 abortions—he claims to do 100 a week. His specialty is killing

kids in the second and third trimester. Tiller knows exactly what he is doing. On his website, he cites that one of the "Three Rules of the Practice" of late-term abortion care is "*Time, patience, and the baby will come.*" (His italics.) The baby will come?

Tiller's Women's Health Care Services advertises a chaplaincy program that provides "sacraments such as baptism of the still born [sic] fetus and blessings for the aborted fetus." Yet no one—including Tiller—offers baptism or blessings for shoes or salamanders. Just kids. We called and asked why the distinction between the baptism for the stillborn and blessings for the aborted baby. Chaplain Diane Warren just laughed and said they would do whatever was requested. But of course—it's all about choice! The kind of choice that Sebelius loves.

In 2002, Sebelius described herself as "a practicing Catholic." But not always. For example, she opposes capital punishment and animal abuse, but supports abortion. Evidently, being a "practicing Catholic" allows her to protect serial murderers, cats and dogs, but not innocent unborn children. But she does not claim ignorance. In 2006, she said, "My Catholic faith teaches me that life is sacred. Personally, I believe abortion is wrong." She said this immediately after she vetoed a bill which would have strengthened her state's ban on late-term abortions.

It is for reasons like these that Archbishop Naumann has been so public in his criticisms of Sebelius. In doing so, he put left-wing Catholics in a jam: their support for Sebelius pitted them against her Ordinary.

Kathleen Sebelius as secretary for HHS will face a real dilemma: She may be called upon to enforce regulations that strip Catholic health-care workers of their right not to perform, or assist in performing, an abortion. She would then effectively create a dilemma for those doctors and nurses—they

would either do what they are ordered to do and risk excommunication, or suffer the consequences. And given that there are more than 2,000 members of the American Association of Pro-Life OB-GYNs alone, it is safe to say that the impending problem could explode.

The Catholic Catechism is not ambiguous: "Formal cooperation in an abortion constitutes a grave offense. The Church attaches the canonical penalty of excommunication to this crime against human life." In other words, if Sebelius enforces regulations which deny conscience rights, she will ineluctably put herself on a collision course with the Catholic Church. Archbishop Naumann said it best when he opined that she "will have to make many decisions that will in all probability continue her personal involvement in promoting legalized abortion and *her cooperation in this intrinsic evil.*" (Our italics.)

In 2003, Gov. Sebelius vetoed a law mandating health standards for abortion clinics in Kansas. Her reasoning? The problem with the bill, she said, was that it allowed "the legislature, instead of physicians and medical personnel, [to] regulate health care procedures." But if her interest in protecting the autonomy rights of health care workers vis-à-vis the state was genuine in that instance, then surely she could invoke the same principle again and insist on conscience rights. We won't hold our breath.

CBS Evening News interviewed Bill Donohue about the Sebelius nomination. He said, "She is the champion of abortion rights right through term, and for Obama to choose somebody who sews such division within the Catholic community to head HHS really is an insult to Catholics."

Finally, it is worth noting that Sebelius once signed a law that calls for the killer of a pregnant woman to be charged with two murders. Someone should ask her who the other person is.