Introduction

Women's health care

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What are the ethical issues related to the care of women that should be of concern to Catholic medical professionals? No doubt, many would identify abortion, contraception, and artificial reproduction at the top of the list—or perhaps as the only issues on that list. But don't these issues involve no less the ethical behavior of men? And doesn't the ethical care of women involve so much more than that associated with their reproductive capacity?

In this special issue of *The Linacre Quarterly*, the guest editors seek to bring an awareness to our readers of a more holistic, a more comprehensive, even a more Catholic understanding of the health care of women.

An ethical approach to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health of women crosses an anatomic and physiologic organ systems-based approach. The articles published here represent only a small number of the myriad of ethical and spiritual issues related to the care of women.

Dr. Pia de Solenni begins with a commentary exploring the question of women's health. Dr. Pilar Vigil et al. provide a comprehensive overview of a multitude of health issues related to the fertility cycles of women. Grace Emily Stark writes on the factors contributing to

lower-than-acceptable breastfeeding rates in the United States. Fr. James McTavish explores the impact of human trafficking on the health of women including an apparent influence on same-sex attraction. Sister Jane Dominic Laurel addresses the spiritual care of the woman who is herself a physician, while Sister Elinor Gardner suggests that the Catholic woman physician has much to offer the ailing field of modern medicine. Finally, Dr. Susan Caldwell reflects, as a physician, on the feminine genius in building a culture of life.

We hope this special topic issue of *The Linacre Quarterly* will serve to broaden the discussion of providing care for women and begin an enhanced consideration and conversation among Catholic medical professionals as to how we may best serve the women who seek our intelligent, attentive, and loving care.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Sr. Mary Diana Dreger, O.P., M.D., is a Dominican Sister of the Saint Cecilia Congregation in Nashville, Tennessee, and practices internal medicine there caring for a largely uninsured, immigrant

population. She trained at Vanderbilt University Medical Center where she is Assistant Clinical Professor in Medicine in the Division of General Internal Medicine and Public Health.

Jean Baric-Parker, M.S., is a candidate for a doctorate in bioethics at Loyola University Chicago, and serves on the Catholic Medical Association's Ethics and Linacre Quarterly Committees, the Finger

Lakes CMA Guild Board, and the Ethics Committee of the Empire State Stem Cell Board.

Catherine DeAngelis, M.D., M.P.H., is University Distinguished Service Professor, Emerita, and professor emerita at Johns Hopkins University Schools of Medicine and Public Health; and editor in chief emerita for the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.