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Statement of Bishop Alvaro Corrada, SJ, Bishop Diocese of Tyler

PUBLIC STATEMENT

I wish to address the matter of direct sterilizations in Catholic Hospitals in the Diocese of Tyler. Last June it was reported by anonymous researchers that a large number of tubal ligations performed in Catholic Hospitals in the state of Texas. Initially both Catholic hospitals in the Diocese of Tyler responded that they were in compliance with the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Services. Sadly, subsequent investigation reveals that there had been a serious mis-interpretation of the ERDs and that in fact many direct sterilizations had been done and continued to be done at the time of the article. As a Bishop, I am deeply saddened and upset by this news. As Bishop of the Diocese of Tyler, I have to admit my failure to provide adequate oversight of the Catholic Hospitals as regards their protection of the sacred dignity of each human person.

Many causes and complications that have resulted in this unacceptable situation. I continue to work directly with the Catholic Hospitals in the Diocese of Tyler, and with my brother Bishops in the state of Texas, to bring an end to immoral procedures and to put in place some method of ongoing accountability and transparency of monitoring both protocols and actual practices. As Catholics, we must insure all people seeking health care in our Catholic Hospitals will be treated with respect and dignity as Jesus teaches us. The Church has approved the Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Services as binding upon our Catholic Hospitals to insure the sacred dignity of each patient is protected and defended. The Directives are for the protection of every woman's human dignity.

Thankfully, in response to their own investigation of the matter, CHRISTUS St. Michael's in Texarkana has discontinued all tubal ligations. They report a favorable response from their local medical community.

Prior to release of the report, Trinity Mother Frances had experienced a 50% reduction in the number of tubal ligations. Trinity Mother Frances is a large health care system and is developing plans to protect the sacred dignity of each human person through compliance with an authentic interpretation of the ERDs, particularly ERD 53 which prohibits direct sterilization.

Bishop Alvaro Corrada, SJ
Bishop of Tyler