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## Bishops? president criticizes Obama over Planned Parenthood

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NCR Today

New York Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the president of the U.S. bishops' conference, has criticized President Barack Obama's attendance at a gala for Planned Parenthood in April, saying the organization's focus on women's health issues is a cover phrase for abortion services.

Writing on his archdiocesan blog Tuesday, Dolan stated that while the president "never mentioned the word 'abortion'" during his remarks at the gala he "praised Planned Parenthood for their work for 'women's health'."

"But make no mistake," the cardinal continues. "Planned Parenthood may hide behind the term 'women's health', but their business is really abortion."

The cardinal's comments came in a posting entitled "The Gift of Life," also posted to his personal website, in which the prelate said the month of May helps Catholics "particularly remember" the Virgin Mary and how "God's creation is bursting forth in all its beauty and fertility."

After mentioning the conviction of rogue Philadelphia abortionist Kermit Gosnell, Dolan states that some thought the doctor's conviction might lead to people in the U.S. "speaking openly and with common sense" and abortion.

"Apparently, though, that's not as easy as it sounds," Dolan states. "Instead, we see the President of the United States attending a gala event and toasting Planned Parenthood," he continues, referring to the president's remarks at the organization's gala, held in Washington April 26.

Dolan is due to step down from his post at the bishops' conference in November. During his three year term in the role, the conference has criticized the Obama administration several times over a mandate from the Department of Health and Human Services over coverage of contraceptive services in health care plans.

In remarks about the mandate, part of the implementation of the health care reform law, Dolan and several other U.S. prelates have sometimes taken a strident tone, painting the matter as an assault on religious freedom.

Dolan received an award for his work on the issue in April from the Chuck Colson Center for Christian Worldview, which said he had "served as a rallying cry for people of faith fighting to preserve their God-given and constitutional right to the free exercise of religion."

Continuing in his blog post Tuesday, Dolan makes reference to reports that New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, a Catholic, might push for broader protections for abortion in his state and calls for the country to listen to "common sense" and "make corrections."

Dolan continues:

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We frequently hear calls for a "national conversation" about serious issues, yet our leaders never seem to want to talk frankly about abortion. It has become the great taboo, the subject that we must never mention. When we do raise the subject, we are accused of "imposing our values" on others.

Really, who is imposing values? When our cultural leaders deny or avoid the truth about abortion, isn't that imposing a view of reality? When the government forces taxpayers to pay for abortion, isn't that an imposition of anti-life values? What about the unborn babies - how do they feel about having the value of "choice" imposed on them in the most permanent way possible?

Deep in our hearts, there are truths that cannot be erased, that cannot be completely clouded by ideology, or utilitarian calculations, or by our own weaknesses and self-delusions. Our lives are an awesome gift, they are precious and must be safeguarded and nurtured. But not just our own - every human life is just as important, and must be preserved and protected as well. We are all called to be a gift of self, a loving servant, to our brothers and sisters, particularly those in need. And we know, at the core of our being, that abortion contradicts these truths.

Our society is once again challenged to recognize these fundamental truths, to discuss them candidly, to deal with the hard and challenging decisions that they entail, and to support those who struggle with them. The days of denial have to come to an end. We can no longer hide behind euphemism and distraction.

Can we all finally agree that things have gone way too far, and begin to make corrections? Can we start to talk common sense?

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