1989

As U.S. Catholic Bishops Prepare Policy Statement on AIDS, University of Dayton Professor Worries About Public Response/UD Students Form Friendships by Helping Kids with Cystic Fibrosis

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AS U.S. CATHOLIC BISHOPS PREPARE POLICY STATEMENT ON AIDS, UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON PROFESSOR WORRIES ABOUT PUBLIC RESPONSE

An assistant professor of religious studies at the University of Dayton remains concerned about the public's perception of people with AIDS as U.S. Catholic bishops prepare to meet Nov. 6-9 in Baltimore at a national conference to formulate the church's policy statement on the disease.

Dennis Doyle, who teaches a one-credit graduate course, "Ministry and Values in Response to AIDS," believes individuals need to deal with their mixed feelings about the disease—and those who suffer from it.

"I want to know what's going on with people who don't have the disease," Doyle said. "What do they say about AIDS on the surface, then what do they feel under the surface? People need to ask themselves, 'Where is the place for things like death, drugs and homosexuality in our conscious and unconscious mind?'"

Doyle, who collaborates with a pastoral care chaplain at Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton to offer workshops for chaplains who minister to persons with AIDS, worries about public response as the disease becomes more widespread. "I want to justify on a theological ground why a compassionate response is the only response to make."

For media interviews, contact Dennis Doyle at (513) 229-4219.

UD STUDENTS FORM FRIENDSHIPS BY HELPING KIDS WITH CYSTIC FIBROSIS

Working with children with a fatal disease would leave many people uneasy, but members of the University of Dayton's Cystic Fibrosis club say it's easy to overcome that feeling when you're helping someone in need.

The students are trained by staff from Children's Medical Center to work with CF patients. They perform once-weekly therapy called postural drainage chest percussion and vibration, which helps drain secretions from specific areas of the lungs.

"It's really not as bad as it sounds, once you realize that the kids are used to it and the therapy isn't hurting them," said Ann Baker, a UD junior and third-year member of the club.

The average life expectancy of a CF patient is about 25 years. Although statistics show that one out of every 20 people is a carrier of the gene, UD junior Brenda Wahle said many of the children don't see the disease as an obstacle.

"Some of these kids don't even realize that they're sick," said Wahle. "They just think they have a cough all of the time."

Wahle and Baker perform therapy on Victoria and Tiffany Koch in Lebanon every two weeks on Mondays from 7 to 11 p.m. Most of the other UD students work with Dayton families. For media interviews, contact Brenda Wahle or Ann Baker at (513) 229-5309.