

# Knights provide window to the womb

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By Tanya Connor

WORCESTER – “This machine, so far, has saved 25 babies.”

William F. Donovan, Knights of Columbus state deputy, was talking last Friday about the ultrasound machine the Knights bought for Problem Pregnancy of Worcester Inc., last fall.

“Babies that were on their way to abortion,” added Roderick P. Murphy, director of Problem Pregnancy, which offers women alternatives to abortion.

“This is proof that we can save lives in this country,” Mr. Donovan said.

“This is the best side of technology,” added Bishop Reilly, who had just blessed the ultrasound machine.

An ultrasound is an imaging technique that uses sound waves to scan a woman’s abdomen showing a picture of the baby in her uterus.

As part of a nationwide initiative, the Knights of Columbus have bought ultrasound machines for crisis pregnancy centers in several states, according to Patrick S. Korten, vice president for communications for the Knights’ Supreme Council in New Haven, Conn., their international headquarters. He said they started the program a year ago.

“The federal courts have made it impossible for people to restrict abortion in almost any way, so, in order to save lives, it is essential that every woman who considers having an abortion is able to fully understand what the procedure involves,” he said. “Clearly, the ultrasound machine is a dramatic means by which the truth can be told. The truth is the unborn child, no matter how tiny, is a living human being. What we have done in helping to provide ultrasound machines to problem pregnancy centers is show individual women what their own child actually looks like.”

The record shows that seeing their unborn child brings a decisive change in their thoughts about having an abortion, he said. He said these women often don’t have health insurance and therefore can’t afford an ultrasound at another facility. Problem Pregnancy doesn’t charge for its services.

Ultrasounds seem to be turning the tide of public opinion more against abortion, Mr. Korten said. He said Knights of Columbus polls show a growth in the number of people who oppose abortion and would favor laws restricting it. Even many who call themselves pro-choice would restrict abortion to a relatively few cases, he said.

The Knights’ Supreme Council offers to pay half the cost of an ultrasound machine if the state council will pay the other half, said Richard F. Guerriero, a past state deputy. Together, they contributed \$25,000 for Problem Pregnancy’s machine, he said.

Last weekend, state leaders were meeting in Worcester and arranged to see the machine, Mr. Korten said.

Mr. Murphy told the Knights the machine is very much appreciated. In addition to saving babies, "it gives everybody a boost," he said of its effect on the morale of counselors.

This high resolution, digital machine is better than Problem Pregnancy's previous one, which was sent to a crisis pregnancy center in Africa, he said. He said this one has a video replay feature which enables the mother to see important things she might have missed initially.

Problem Pregnancy bought a second screen which offers another position from which to view the ultrasound and an audio option that enables the mother to hear her baby's heartbeat, he said.

Friday a sidewalk counselor in her 70s convinced a woman headed to the Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts building across the street to come to Problem Pregnancy instead, said Kathy Lake, a registered nurse who volunteers at Problem Pregnancy. She said the woman had recently had an abortion.

At Problem Pregnancy the woman learned she was pregnant again, and decided to keep her baby, Mrs. Lake said. The woman will be given an ultrasound in a couple of weeks, but on Friday was shown a model of the stage of development her baby is in, Mrs. Lake and Mr. Murphy said. Mrs. Lake said the woman said Planned Parenthood, where abortions are performed, lies, because there she was told "it" was a blob of tissue.

Throughout Planned Parenthood's existence in Worcester, Problem Pregnancy has been working in close proximity to counter the abortion business. In 1982, after Planned Parenthood opened at 340 Main St., pro-lifers established Problem Pregnancy and located its office down the hall from the abortion facility. After Planned Parenthood moved to Lincoln Street in 1993, so did Problem Pregnancy.

Upon learning more than two years ago that Planned Parenthood was preparing to move again, Problem Pregnancy bought a building across the street – at 495 Pleasant St. – and has been operating there since May 2008, Mr. Murphy said.