

Bishop Holley calls for end to targeting of black women for abortions

WASHINGTON - A leading black Catholic bishop called on African-Americans to "defend our community" against an abortion industry that he said is performing abortions on minority women at a disproportionate rate.

Auxiliary Bishop Martin D. Holley of Washington, who chairs the U.S. bishops' Subcommittee on African-American Affairs and serves on their Committee on Pro-Life Activities, was commenting on a report by the New York-based Guttmacher Institute on abortion trends between 1974 and 2004.

The report found that although abortion rates for all racial and ethnic groups had declined between 1989 and 2004, the rates now range from 11 per 1,000 non-Hispanic women to 28 per 1,000 Hispanic women and 50 per 1,000 black women.

In 2004, 37 percent of all abortions performed in the United States were obtained by black women, 34 percent by non-Hispanic white women, 22 percent by Hispanic women and 8 percent by women of races other than white or black, the report said.

"As an African-American I am saddened by evidence that black women continue to be targeted by the abortion industry," Bishop Holley said in an Oct. 15 statement. "The loss of any child from abortion is a tragedy, but we must ask: Why are minority children being aborted at such disproportionate rates?"

Repeating a theme from his article for the 2008 Respect Life program, Bishop Holley said the abortion issue "clearly must be at the heart and center of our discussion of the survival of African-American people."

"Our legitimate commitment to other social concerns must not push the primary moral issue of abortion onto the back burner," he said.

Bishop Holley noted that officials at Guttmacher cited the report as evidence that

policymakers must “redouble their efforts to improve access to subsidized contraceptive services for these women.”

But the bishop said studies have shown that “increased access to contraceptives, especially among teens, does not reduce unintended pregnancy and abortion” and some have linked increased access to contraception to an increase in sexually transmitted diseases, “with no decrease in abortion rates.”

He called for an end to federal funding of Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers.

“Every year the federal government gives over \$300 million to Planned Parenthood,” Bishop Holley said. “Last year for the first time Planned Parenthood took in over \$1 billion and reported a profit of \$51 million.”

He said that more than 80 percent of Planned Parenthood clinics are located in minority neighborhoods and that Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood, once started the “Negro Project” to reduce the black population.

Bishop Holley called for “an end to the victimizing of African-American children, women, families and communities by Planned Parenthood and others in the abortion industry.”

“Let us defend our community by rededicating ourselves to family life and marriage, promoting the gift of chastity and marital fidelity, committing ourselves to prayer and service to others and defending the life and dignity of each human person,” he added. “We can welcome every child as a gift and we can overcome abortion.”