

Give the Gift of Live - Organ Transplants

Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan, *People of God*, December 2011 issue



Recently the New Mexico Donor Services has asked me to support to their efforts to increase awareness of lifesaving organ donations and transplants. Many New Mexicans are faced with having to make a donation decision for themselves when obtaining a drivers license or for a loved one at the time of death. Sadly, numerous families decline the opportunity to save the lives of others because they do not know that our Catholic faith views very positively the concept of lifesaving organ donations and transplants.

Maria Sanders, who is the Director for New Mexico Donor Services and a member of John XXIII Catholic Community has asked me to let the people of the Archdiocese know that the Church looks at organ donations and transplants as something charitable and good. No one is required to do it but certainly it is important for all Catholics to know that the Church views this favorably.

I am told that there are over 700 New Mexicans awaiting a lifesaving transplant right now; one-third are Hispanic, one-third are Native Americans and one-third are Caucasian. More than 100,000 men, women and children are on the national waiting list in the United States. Archdioceses throughout the United States have been very supportive to the organ donation education efforts including the Archdioceses of Chicago, Austin, Denver, Los Angeles and many more. I certainly support this effort to educate our people about the worthwhile values of donating their own organs at the time of death so that others can be helped. It is indeed a form of charity and it is to be commended. Again, please note that no one is required to do such a thing but Catholics must know that it is very much in keeping with the teachings of our Church.

Life is the greatest gift of all and today it is a gift that can be shared through organ and tissue donations, people have the potential to reach out and do good in this world. They can save the lives of those who would die without help. They can give new hope to their families. They can transform and improve lives like restoring sight, health and wholeness.

It is one of the greatest opportunities today for those who seek to give good, pass along life and help their fellow human beings. There are a number of our priests who have placed an emblem on their driver's licenses making it clear that they are organ donors. Please pass the word to those whom you know that it is morally and ethically acceptable to the Vatican and to the Bishops of our Country.

This Christmas Season, if you wish, give the gift of life and remember to sign up as an organ donor when you renew your license!