



FEMM replies to concerns raised by the Pope Paul VI Institute August 2017.

Obj. 1: “The Pope Paul VI Institute attempted, in good faith, to work with FEMM’s developer, Anna Halpine. When ethical issues and strategies prevented an ongoing working relationship, the collaboration ended.”

Reply 1: The ethical issue regarded whether or not it is legitimate to have a medical practice that offers hormonal treatment to women, and increases their fertility, without demanding that the patient act according to Catholic morality in order to receive treatment. FEMM says that it is good to help a patient receive proper medical care, even if the patient may do something immoral once care is received. All doctors act upon this principle regularly: a doctor may help heal a man’s liver damage, even if the man is a drunk; he may re-attach a man’s severed fingers even if the man is a thief and harmed his fingers while stealing. In all these cases, the physician should recommend that the patient avoid immoral activity, but he may legitimately treat the malady. Even if it is very likely that the treatment will facilitate further immoral activity, the treatment in itself is good and does not *per se* lead to immoral activity.

The strategic issues that could not be resolved included FEMM’s commitment to: developing an app and using technology to reach broader segments of women; translating information into Spanish and other languages as needed; training doctors around the world (not just in Omaha); collaborating with other researchers; publishing research in peer-reviewed publications; pursuing science and evidence based research to further examine lines of study indicated by Humanae Vitae and other Catholic sexual ethics statements, while addressing pressing clinical and practical support needed for women and couples alike.

Obj. 2: “FEMM was developed shortly thereafter as a secular organization that does not promote nor is not guided by Catholic teaching though is promoting its effort within the Catholic Church.”

Reply 2: FEMM promotes its efforts within the Catholic Church because its program is consonant with Church sexual ethics and social teaching. However, FEMM also promotes its efforts outside of the Catholic Church, in order to bring educational, scientific, and clinical support to those who do not hold the Catholic faith. FEMM has scientific modules that are aligned with Catholic teaching but do not mention Church



teaching or sexual ethics. FEMM is also in process of developing a Catholic module that can be taught in Catholic-specific settings. This dual program allows FEMM to reach women around the world in a way that a Catholic-only program could not achieve.

Obj. 3: “Unlike NaProTECHNOLOGY, FEMM promoted its new model without any published research specific to FEMM’s medical protocols or effectiveness.”

Reply 3: On the contrary, FEMM’s researchers have published their findings in some of the most-respected medical journals, which guarantees that their research has been reviewed by top medical researchers around the world. In contrast, NaPro has primarily self-published their work.

Obj. 4: “FEMM physicians do not prescribe the birth control pill in the FEMM clinics. However, it has now been documented that nothing would preclude any FEMM physician prescribing the birth control pill in their regular medical practices including other artificial procedures.”

Reply 4: FEMM physicians do not prescribe the birth control pill in FEMM clinics because this violates the scientific and ethical commitments of FEMM. FEMM physicians therefore also do not violate Catholic teaching in FEMM clinics. But FEMM does not insist that only practicing Catholic physicians practice in their clinics: it opens the door to whoever agrees to practice medicine properly in FEMM clinics. This is similar to the legitimate practice of Catholic hospitals that hire physicians, nurses, pharmacists, and so on, on a part-time basis—so long as the employees do not violate Catholic teaching on site. Likewise, Catholic schools may legitimately hire Protestant teachers, even if the Protestant teaches Sunday school at his local Baptist congregation, so long as the teacher does not inculcate Protestantism in the classroom.

