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For Immediate Release
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FALL RIVER, MA: Three diocesan health care professionals recently completed a yearlong course administered by the National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) in Philadelphia, PA and became certified under the National Catholic Health Care Ethics Program.

Jennifer Davis, Assistant Administrator at Catholic Memorial Home, Fall River; Thomas F. Healy, Administrator at Catholic Memorial Home; and Manuel Benevides, Administrator at Sacred Heart Home, New Bedford were sponsored by Monsignor Edmund J. Fitzgerald, Executive Director of the Diocesan Health Facilities, the system of long term care services and elder care community programs sponsored by the Diocese of Fall River. They join seven diocesan health care professionals in becoming certified by the National Catholic Health Care Ethics Program.

The National Catholic Certification Program in Health Care Ethics provides a yearlong program that deals with the major bioethical issues that arise in modern medical and research environments. Father Tad Pacholczyk is director of education at the National Catholic Bioethics Center (NCBC) in Philadelphia and a priest of the Fall River diocese.

“I think that the certification program is very important because there are so many ethical health questions we deal with in our facilities,” Monsignor Fitzgerald said. “Being in the long term care industry, we need to have an understanding of the ethical and religious directives (ERDs) and of Catholic principles. We think it is a very important investment.”

The participants went through an intensive, yearlong course to achieve their certification that included weekly assignments, online interactions, and teleconferences and a final conference in Philadelphia where each person participated in a one-on-one interview, a mock ethics committee, and the presentation of a thesis paper on a specific topic of their choosing.

Manuel Benevides found the experience “...to be intellectually and morally stimulating. As a result of taking the course, I am better prepared to explain and defend our Catholic position on bioethical issues.”

“Being certified in bioethics has helped to enhance my knowledge of Catholic teachings and my decision making skills at work. I feel I have more resources to look at a situation as a whole to then help guide the resident and their family through their decision making process, along with the rest of our clinical team,” said Jennifer Davis.

“The process of completing this course is enlightening, and gives us information that we can use on a daily basis, in the long term care setting and our everyday lives,” said Tom Healy.