

Pro-life pharmacist urges college students to mind the 'little whispers'

Written by Terry Cregar | The Catholic Miscellany
Thursday, 02 October 2008 00:00 -

CLEMSON — After years of working in relative isolation, Mike Koelzer and his small pharmacy in Grand Rapids, Mich., are beginning to get some wider attention.

Koelzer owns Kay Pharmacy and is the founder of ProLifePharmacy.com. His is one of a growing list of privately owned pharmacies across the country that have chosen not to fill prescriptions for birth-control pills.

Koelzer has shared his story on the national stage through interviews with The Washington Post, ABC's World News with Charles Gibson, and Prime Time America. Last week he spoke to around 30 Clemson University students and community members.

Many of the students in attendance are part of a new organization on the Clemson campus called CU Students for Life. Koelzer was the first of many pro-life speakers they hope to host in the coming months.

Koelzer told the students that what started as a "whisper" from God has turned into his story now heard by millions.

That quiet message from God came some five years into his career working in his dad's pharmacy. On that day, he received a call from his cousin who told Koelzer that the birth control pills they were dispensing cause abortions.

"As Catholics, we know that life begins at fertilization, and I found out on that day that for the past five years I had a hand in killing babies," Koelzer said.

The father of nine children, Koelzer told the students that the realization pushed him to learn more about contraceptives and their effects on women and their pregnancies. At the same time, Koelzer said he was growing closer to the Catholic Church and learning more about his faith and its belief in the sanctity of life.

After inheriting ownership of the family pharmacy from his father, and with his father's blessing, the junior Koelzer decided in early 2002 to instruct his employees to stop selling birth control pills. He said it was a decision that the Holy Spirit — working through his cousin and others — led him to make.

He urged the college students to be mindful of those "little whispers" in their lives.

"If I had not gotten that call from my cousin, who knows where I would be right now," Koelzer said.

He said the lone purpose of that decision eight years ago was to stop selling contraceptives. At the time, there were no plans to take that effort beyond Grand Rapids.

But, since starting the pro-life Web site last year and appearing on national newscasts that summer, Koelzer's mission has grown.

"All pharmacies should be pro-life, whether their customers are one-cell big or 99 years old," he said. "The onus should be on those pharmacies."

For more information
on Koelzer and his work, visit www.prolifepharmacy.com
or www.kaypharmacy.com.