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Obama and Common Good

Maureen Fiedler | Mar. 19, 2010 NCR Today

President Obama held a rally for health care reform today at George Mason University in Virginia. The most compelling part of his message was -- for me, at least -- his appeal to the moral issue of ensuring the common good.

"It's a debate that is not only about the cost of health care," he said. "It's a debate about the character of our country -- about whether we can still meet the challenges of our time; whether we still have the guts and the courage to give every citizen, not just some, the chance to reach their dreams."

That?s the gut of the issue? deciding that we as a society will provide everyone, rich or poor, old or young? with the health care they need. It?s a vision of the common good, something integral to the Catholic tradition, and many other faith traditions as well.

On the other hand, the core of the opposition to health care reform is not about abortion, or costs, or fear of mythical ?government takeovers?. I am convinced that opposition, in its most basic form, is fueled by those who don?t want to lower their profits, or share resources with people who do not have health care, or can?t afford it. They rarely say that out loud; it sounds bad? not sharing, not caring about the poor. But it?s there, and it?s loud and it?s ugly.

But come Sunday?s vote? it will not win.

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