Supreme Court Issues Stay in Pending Church Plan Case

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On Wednesday, September 21, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered a stay in the ongoing church plan litigation involving the pension plan of Dignity Health, a healthcare system affiliated with the Catholic Church. Earlier this year, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit held that Dignity Health's pension plan did not qualify as a church plan because it was not established and maintained by a church or a convention or association of churches, but rather by a non-profit organization merely affiliated with a religious organization. Consequently, Dignity Health's plan would no longer be exempt from ERISA. Dignity Health appealed the Ninth Circuit's ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court, but the Court has yet to announce whether it will hear that appeal or the appeals filed in two other church plan cases involving the pension plans of Advocate Health Care Network and Saint Peter's Health System. The Supreme Court's order means that Dignity Health's plan will remain exempt from ERISA until the Court decides whether to hear its appeal. If the Court accepts the appeal, Dignity Health's plan will remain exempt from ERISA until the Court decides the case on its merits. **Read the Supreme Court's order in *Dignity Health v. Rollins*.** **Read the Ninth Circuit's opinion in that case.**