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## "LUKE, THE MOST DEAR PHYSICIAN, SALUTETH YOU" (Col. Cap. 4-14)

BY VERY REVEREND CLEMENT M. THUENTE, O.P., S.T.Lr.  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

Catholic physicians must feel honored when they read, in the Epistle of St. Paul, that a member of their noble profession, Saint Luke, was one of the four Evangelists, and "a most dear friend" of the great Apostle of the Gentiles and a friend of many of his distinguished converts.

The reading of the Holy Bible, especially of the New Testament, is frequently recommended to all Catholics. It is highly important that Catholic physicians turn to Saint Luke, their patron, and read his Gospel and the "Acts of the Apostles" written by him.

In the Gospel of Saint Luke, as in no other Gospel, do we find the history of the Holy Family. There we find the exquisite record of the five joyful mysteries of the holy Rosary; the Angelic Salutation, "Hail full of grace"; the Magnificat; the *Nunc demittis*; the "Benedictus"—all most delicately, most beautifully set forth.

Saint Luke pictures our Lord "going about doing good" and "as most merciful" in His loving ministrations to those needing Him. In this Gospel, and in this Gospel alone, we find the beautiful parable of the good Samaritan who, seeing the wounded man by the wayside, had compassion on him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine . . . taking care of him.

Before Christ's ascension into heaven, He commanded His Apostles, "going therefore teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the-world." In the "Acts of the Apostles," Saint Luke relates much concerning the magnificent efforts of Saint Peter and Saint Paul to carry out this great commandment of Christ, and everywhere and always is the divine Saviour pictured as near to His dearly beloved Apostles as they worked heroically to do His will as He had commanded.

Saint Luke, disciple, constant companion, and intimate friend of Saint Paul, is mentioned also as "Luke, the most dear physician," thus indicating clearly that he was not only a friend but also the attentive devoted doctor of Saint Paul and of many of his converts. This intimate friendship between these great souls is all the more striking when we consider the birth, education, and character of these two—Luke and Paul. Luke was a Gentile of Greek origin, a physician, a scholar, and an artist. Paul was a Jew, and before his conversion a fanatical member of the Jewish

religion and Jewish traditions.

The love of Christ made Paul, the once fanatical Jew, and Luke, the gentle scholar, intimate Christian friends; men that had, to use a beautiful expression of Saint Luke, "one heart and one soul." Christ said, "where two or more are united in my name, I am in the midst of them." Luke and Paul were united in the name of Jesus Christ, and Christ was and remained in the midst of them and made them powerful.

This ideal friendship of the great evangelist and the great apostle of the Gentiles was according to the divine model. At the last supper Christ said to His disciples: "I have called you friends because all things whatever I have heard of my Father I have made known to you." (John 15-15.) Both Luke and Paul were inspired by the Holy Spirit, and whatever they heard in this mysterious way they made known to each other, "All things were common unto them."

Physicians who read attentively and devoutly these books of their patron, Saint Luke, will find in them solid, substantial, consoling food for their life of faith, and inspiration for their professional work—work that should be entered into with the courage of Christian nobility and the dignity of a servant of God. In imitation of Saint Luke, a physician who follows this glorious apostle, will work in close co-operation with the priest at the bedside of the patient. That patient has a body

and an immortal soul. Both are wounded. The primary duty of the physician is to pour oil and wine into the wounds of the body. The primary mission of the priest is to pour spiritual oil and wine into the wounds of the soul. Thus working together, "one heart and one soul," they will enjoy the blessing of Christ, the divine Samaritan, and they will bring many of the wounded to their eternal home.

Every priest and missionary can remember with gratitude those Luke-like physicians that have helped in the great work of relief of suffering humanity. It is with pleasure, and with a feeling of being privileged to speak of great souls of happy memory, that I recall the names of such distinguished Catholic physicians as Doctor Joseph A. Dillon of New York, Doctor Stephen J. Maher of New Haven, and Doctor James J. Walsh of New York.

For thirty years the late Doctor Dillon, like Saint Luke, was the helpful, attentive friend and "most dear physician" of the venerable Monsignor Lavelle, that admirable priest, monsignor, vicar-general, and pastor of St. Patrick's Cathedral, whose vitality at the age of eighty years challenged the activity of those about him, as he labored unsparingly and lovingly for those entrusted to his spiritual care.

For forty-four years Doctor Dillon was connected with the New York Foundling Hospital, a great and well-known institution



for the saying of Christ's little ones. In spite of his busy life spent in this work of charity, Doctor Dillon had time to serve as president of the Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds, and to edit most ably the official organ, *THE LINACRE QUARTERLY*.

In all his activity he was efficient, yet kind; firm, yet charitable; proud of accomplishment for the good of humanity, yet humble and self-effacing in remembering that he was but an instrument for the fulfilment of the will of God. With sincerity he worked for others; with spiritual joy and happy contentment he labored for God.

Another great physician who devoted his life to the sick and suffering was the late Doctor Stephen J. Maher of New Haven, Connecticut. In the history of medicine there is hardly to be found the name of one who worked more zealously for progress in the cause of health than did Doctor Maher in his long fight for the care and cure of those afflicted with tuberculosis.

Gifted with a brilliant mind, Doctor Maher early in his career turned his back on the world to give himself up to a life of self-abnegation and study that others might benefit from his having lived. So arduously did he work that, at his death, it was written of him: "owing to his unselfish devotion to the cause, his home state of Connecticut has risen to the leading position in the care of tubercular patients and in the de-

clining death rate from that disease . . . the 'terrible waiting list' (of the Connecticut Sanatoria) has been reduced from 500 to less than 100. . . . In 1928, Doctor Maher was named by President Coolidge as United States representative to the International Tuberculosis Conference in Rome. Again in 1930, President Hoover reappointed Doctor Maher to attend the Conference held this time in Oslo. . . . The University of Notre Dame honored him by giving to him the 'Lactare Medal.' . . . The Church of which he is a communicant has a right to be proud of the eminence he has attained."

All that is well known, but very few know that this learned, energetic, internationally famous physician was a devout member of the Church, a friend of the clergy, a prayerful Christian who was often seen kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament praying, no doubt, for his patients, praying for light to find a remedy for the many tubercular victims whose cause he championed, and for whom he was willing to spend all the years of his long life. Only those who experienced the effects of his charity knew the tenderness of his heart and the joy he found in helping others.

For recreation Doctor Maher enjoyed writing. He sensed the problem of the Negro and wrote "The Sister of a Certain Soldier"; he loved religion and wrote "A Lenten Litany"; he was a true patriot and wrote "America, Our

Own." So it is that those who were privileged to know Doctor Maher found in him the attributes that made him a worthy follower of Saint Luke, and a true gentleman of God.

Doctor James J. Walsh, physician, professor, lecturer, and author of many important books, was one of the most eminent, or perhaps the most eminent Catholic layman of the early twentieth century. With what wit and candor he recounted the glorious achievements of Catholics in all centuries. With what pride he pointed to the brilliancy of Catholicity in the thirteenth century, and with what incontrovertible facts he set at naught the fallacy of the Dark Ages.

Doctor Walsh, like Saint Luke, spoke upon many occasions to make known the great work the Church has done for the advancement of science. On one occasion addressing a group of Catholic nurses he remarked substantially: "You, good Catholic nurses, will often meet doctors who are infidels, doctors who are atheists, and they will tell you that it is they who have accomplished all in the progress of medicine—that we Catholics have done very little. As a matter of fact, of the twelve important discoveries that have been made in the last century eleven were made by Catholic doctors, and the twelfth by a believing Christian. Some of these infidel physicians remind me of a pin

—the point is sharp, but the head is small." Thus with wit and humor the great scholar spoke in defense of his fellow Catholics.

But Doctor Walsh's life was not all spent in writing and teaching and lecturing. He was a practicing physician at the service of all he could find strength to serve. Mother Alphonse Hawthorne Lathrop found in Doctor Walsh a ready friend to help her in that great charity for the incurable cancer victims. Often the mesmeric personality of Doctor Walsh brought joy into those lives so saddened by pain. When he could not physically relieve those tortured by disease, he buoyed them up with spiritual hope and helped to make heroically brave and enduring, those suffering victims of Christ's poor. This is but one example of his great charity in the field of medicine. Verily, like our Saviour, he went about doing good.

These three Catholic physicians worked in the name of Jesus Christ, the great Physician, the Author of all life and the Giver of all health. Catholic physicians who work in His adorable name will, like these great souls, enjoy His all-important blessing. Like Saint Luke, they will become apostles of mercy to the suffering, spending their lives that others may live more abundantly, and that others may die more gloriously "in the sweet light of God's holy love".