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## President's Page

William A. Lynch

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## President's Page



My first words, I feel, must be concerned with my predecessor, Dr. Herbert Ratner. It is rote and platitudinous to start this way — but not everyone has such a predecessor in office.

In ancient days, a potter's trade was not only honorable, but important. Most vessels used around the home were made of clay, as were many commercial containers for wine, oil, etc. There were, as usual, good and bad potters. Among the bad potters were those who were also dishonest. When they made a vessel that developed a crack (which the good workman would discard) they would patch the crack in the pottery vessel with *wax*, glaze it and sell it, knowing full well that the purchaser couldn't tell the difference until he took it home and poured a hot solution into it, whereupon the wax would melt and the vessel would split apart.

To protect his reputation, the responsible craftsman would label or advertise his vase or bowl, *sine cera* — without wax — meaning this was an honest, genuine product by an honest, genuine craftsman. From these two Latin words, *sine cera* in this context, we get our English word "sincere."

Of all the titles we might serve to our outgoing president, the simplest and most expressive, I think is "sincere" — the honest, genuine workman.

There are no cracks in his armor.

There's no weak wax in his craftsmanship.

To an unusual intelligence he has supplied *sincerity* of purpose, an honest life and dedication beyond the call of duty — and loved every minute of it! *Prosit*.

The honor you have given me as president I construe to be an invitation to work. The greatest specific challenge that has emerged in the last 15 years for a Catholic professional group has been the adaptation of the Church's teaching to the world of today. We can help, and I feel we have that obligation.

Paul VI recently spoke about the "thirst for authenticity" — a thirst felt with greater intensity today than in previous eras largely due to the enormous power of communication.

In the years prior to *Humanae Vitae*, the weekly papal allocutions were making clear the papal mind on what was to come. At the same time so many who wouldn't or didn't read were asking, "Why is he so silent?" We were told that the Holy See received messages from church leaders throughout the world pleading only that the message contain a defense of the family.

Since *Humanae Vitae*, international societies have been formed and social movements publicized whose only ostensible purpose seems to be the destruction of the family (cf. *Death of the Family* by Cooper and the spate of volumes on the two-child, one-child, and childless family).

The medical-moral problems which have been capturing the news and making the headlines for the past 20 years have to do with marriage and the family.

We hope to set up in the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds integrated units of dedicated physicians, clergy, nurses, and educators, who will rise to the challenge and assuage the "thirst for authenticity" about these medical, ethical, and moral problems regarding marriage and family. The first unit performed at our annual meeting in September.

Somewhere in our educational process our young must be taught the great one-liner of Anna Karenina — the first line: "All happy families resemble one another; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way."

Our last two generations haven't been taught that the men and women who, for good reasons and bad, revolt against the family are, for good reasons and bad, simply revolting against mankind.

Somewhere along the line they must be taught that a good husband and father who is working because it is his duty to work for his family and because it is God's will, is really praying all the time.

Somewhere along the line they must be taught the ancient Hebrew proverb: "All the blessings of a household come through the wife. Therefore, should her husband honor her." . . . Let men beware of causing women to weep; God counts their tears.

Somewhere along the line they must be taught that children teach — themselves, their parents and other children; that children supply the curiosity in the world; that children represent the future of the nation, the world — but they must be *here*.

Somewhere along the line these characteristics of the lover must be taught — thoughtfulness, kindness, gentleness, restraint — before any approach to family and the medical, moral, and social problems arising from them can be solved on the thought that we're all God's children and we will happily be, one day, all of us, reunited with Him.

To accomplish this, somewhere in the educational process all must learn that love can be the most terrifying of human emotions — the only one in which one places his or her happiness in the happiness of another.

We must not, however, be satisfied with trying to help solve problems. We all must be prepared to teach — the authenticity of the truth, the celibate state, conjugal love, the family — adapting the teaching of the Magisterium to the world of today.

— William A. Lynch, M.D.  
President

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