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Mission Statement of The Catholic Physicians' Guild of Chicago

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I. Purpose

The purpose of the Catholic Physicians' Guild of Chicago is stated in the Constitution of the Catholic Medical Association (formerly the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds):

1. To uphold the principles of Catholic faith and morality as related to the science and practice of medicine.
2. To cooperate in leading the Christian Community, especially with the particular medical expertise and experience of the Catholic physician, to understand, develop, and apply Christ's principles of faith and morality to modern medical science and practice.
3. To lead the Christian community in the work of communicating Catholic medical ethics to the medical profession and the community at large.
4. To uphold Catholic hospitals in the application of Catholic moral principles in medical practice.
5. To enable Catholic physicians to know one another better and to work together with deeper mutual support and understanding.

This statement of purpose expresses an orientation of service to the Church and the community. The key to understanding and carrying out this purpose is the concept of "apostolate" as defined by Rev. John A. Hardon S.J. in his Modern Catholic Dictionary:
The work of an apostle, not only of the first followers of Christ but of all the faithful who carry on the original mission entrusted by the Savior to the twelve, to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). The apostolate belongs essentially to the order of grace. Its purpose is not temporal welfare, however noble, but to bring people to the knowledge and love of Christ and, through obedience to his teaching, help them attain life everlasting.

The apostolate of the Catholic physician falls between a primary vocation, or state in life and a mere career. From before Christian times, medicine has been included among the learned professions. Its members are "professed" to serve a basic need of their fellow men, that of health. Their work is ordered not merely towards making a living for themselves and their families, as in a trade or craft, but primarily towards the good of the patient. Medicine is an organized profession primarily in order to maintain this ethic of service.

As Catholic physicians, our profession is raised to a new level. Through grace we are called upon to imitate the Divine Physician, to do His work, to allow Him to act through us, to be Christ for others. This is why we are called to an apostolate. This is why we come together to support each other in Christ's name, that He may be present among us, and that He may come to others through us. Our apostolate, therefore, must not demand so much that it overshadows our primary vocation, but it must demand enough to keep our minds and hearts fixed on our calling.

According to the definition cited above, the three requirements of apostolate are, first, that it is the work of apostles, that is, those who have answered a call, who have embarked on a life's work, who have committed themselves to "carry on the mission entrusted by the Savior." The second requirement is that an apostolate "belongs essentially to the order of grace," that is, it is primarily ordered to spiritual ends and is sustained by spiritual means. Third, the apostolate achieves its ends "through obedience to (Christ's) teaching," that is it is faithful to the Magisterium, the teaching authority which Christ Himself vested in the Church.

The Catholic Physicians' Guild of Chicago fulfills the
requirements in the following ways:

First, an apostolate demands a commitment from its members. Each member of the Catholic Physicians’ Guild is asked to participate in the spiritual activities of the Guild, and to commit to particular forms of poverty, chastity, and obedience which are appropriate to each member’s own state of life.

For example, an act of poverty as a Catholic physician could be to render a service without fee, to donate time to serving the medical needs of the poor, or some other personal sacrifice of time or material goods. A commitment to perform at least one act of poverty per week is asked of each member.

Chastity for the physician means to live chastely according to one’s state of life, but especially in relation to one’s patients, who place themselves in a position of vulnerability and dependence upon the benevolence of the physician.

Obedience appropriate to the Catholic physician means obedience to the teachings of the Magisterium, especially as they affect medical practice. These commitments to appropriate forms of poverty, chastity, and obedience are embodied in the “Catholic Physician’s Annual Promises” (see V, below), which are made in conjunction with the White Mass.

Second, the Guild is sustained by prayers, masses, and evenings of recollection. The annual White Mass celebrating the feast of St. Luke is a high point of the year. The White Mass is offered for the deceased members of the Guild. Even when the members cannot come together physically, they come together spiritually. Each member is encouraged to say a brief prayer daily. This prayer, derived from the Constitution of the CMA-NFCPG is found in IV, below.

Third, the Catholic Physicians’ Guild is explicitly loyal to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church in the person of the Bishop of Rome, united with the Archbishop of Chicago and all the bishops in union with the Pope.

In order to carry out this apostolate effectively, the Catholic Physicians’ Guild of Chicago has adopted certain fundamental principles and endorses the principles of medical ethics of the Linacre Institute of the Catholic Medical Association.
II. Fundamental Principles

The Catholic Physicians' Guild of Chicago exists:

1. To give honor and glory to God.
2. To serve His Church.
3. To assist members of the Guild in personal formation as Catholic physicians according to the particular vocation and state of life of each.
4. To affirm that the essential and primary end of the medical profession is to serve the good of each patient and the secondary and subsidiary end is to serve the good of society as a whole.
5. To maintain the Hippocratic tradition of Medicine as a learned profession based on an ethic of truth, life, and service; oriented towards the health of the sick; and not subordinate to political or economic pressures, trends, or structures.
6. To affirm that the practice of medicine is a service by persons to persons, not by institutions to populations.
7. To affirm that the physician's role in healing is secondary to that of nature.
8. To affirm Catholic principles of medical ethics as ordered to the fundamental good of the human person.
9. To affirm the teachings of the Catholic Church on marriage and the family, and to elucidate those teachings as consistent with nature and with the highest standards of medical practice.
10. To affirm the normative biological family (father, mother, and children), lifelong, monogamous, and open to new life, as the fundamental and source of human health and happiness.
11. To affirm the right to life of every human being, from fertilization to natural death.
12. To work for the establishment of a culture of life.
13. To affirm freedom of conscience and the right to refuse to participate in immoral procedures for all who work in

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health and medical care.
14. To support Catholic social teaching, especially in the area of health care.
15. To affirm the principle that society and its institutions exist for the good of persons and must be subordinate to that good.
16. To affirm the principle of subsidiarity in the legal, economic, and social ordering of society.
17. To affirm the family as the fundamental unit of society, whose proper functions, such as the care and education of children, cannot be assumed by larger units of society without grave harm.
18. To participate in the care of the poor.
19. To support the medical missions.
20. To uphold the mission of Catholic hospitals.
21. To explore the role of prayer in medical care and healing.
22. To assist the Archbishop of Chicago, his auxiliary bishops, and the priests of the Archdiocese in all areas in which Catholic physicians can provide knowledge or expertise.
23. To assist public office holders in developing and administering just legislation.
24. To participate in the public forum and to employ the means of mass communication as an active voice for Catholic social and ethical teaching and for the Hippocratic tradition of medicine.

### III. Principles of Medical Ethics

1. Since there is no incompatibility between science and religion, it is possible to provide the highest standards of medical care without compromising Catholic principles.
2. The life of every individual is created in the image and likeness of God, and is therefore sacred and inviolable from conception to natural death.
3. All persons are entitled to a dignified death in God's own time, but directly killing patients or assisting in their suicide is abhorrent regardless of poor quality of life or
survival expectancy.
4. The duty to preserve life does not involve an obligation to prolong the dying process by technological measures.
5. A competent patient is entitled to decline extraordinary therapeutic measures whose burdens exceed their benefits.
6. The patient’s autonomy does not supersede the conscience of the physician. Therefore, the physician must be free to refuse to participate in immoral procedures, and free to refuse to refer to other providers who might be willing to perform such procedures.
7. Abortion is an unspeakable crime and no Catholic physician should cooperate formally or materially in its performance.
8. The life of an individual is a great good which is a good “of” the person and not just a good “for” the person. It is not merely instrumental to other goals — it is an intrinsic good.
9. Food and drink are modalities of ordinary care and not a treatment of a disease. Discontinuing nutrition and hydration for a patient who is not imminently dying violates in its intention the distinction between “causing death” and “allowing death.”
10. There should be no invidious discrimination in the delivery of medical care based on social or economic factors. An operation which is indicated for the intelligent child of wealthy parents is also indicated for the retarded child of impoverished parents.
11. The unitive and procreative ends of marriage may not be artificially separated. Any measure whose directly intended purpose is to sterilize the patient temporarily or permanently is morally unacceptable.
12. The family as a natural institution is divinely inspired. The family is the essential building block from which society is constructed.
13. The economic and social policies of the state should be ordered to the protection and strengthening of families.
14. A family is a group related by birth, marriage, or adoption. Any attempt to elevate extramarital or homosexual
cohabitation to the status of committed heterosexual marriage is contrary to the best interests of the family and society.

15. It is appropriate for individuals and families to espouse a value system and to promote that system both in private and in their community activities.

16. The value of any individual life is not diminished by physical or mental handicap, economic circumstances, or state of dependency based on age.

17. The economy of the United States should be ordered so as to provide equality of opportunity regardless of race, religion, or national origin. Although individual differences may prevent equality of outcome, all individuals should be free to pursue their maximum potential in a just society.

18. The state exists for the individual and not the individual for the state. Medical decisions should be made in the best interests of the individual patient rather than the interests of relatives or the society at large.

19. In an affluent society, rationing of limited medical resources or triage among individual patients should be carried out in accordance with the principles of distributive justice.

IV. Catholic Physician's Daily Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, help me to submit my mind and heart to You in all my actions, personal and professional, to bring Your Holy Spirit to all who are touched by my science and art, and to be available humbly to assist the Vicar of Christ, the Bishops, and the whole Christian community with the particular knowledge, skill, and experience I have as a Christian physician. O Divine Physician, help me to uphold the principles of Catholic faith and morality in the science and practice of medicine, to communicate these principles to the medical profession and to society at large, to uphold Catholic hospitals in the application of Catholic moral principles, to work with my colleagues in charity, truth, and understanding, and to work to bring others to the apostolate. Mother of God, who at Cana
occasioned the entry of your Divine Son upon His public life of compassion, mercy, and healing, intercede for us, asking especially for us the graces of humility and of fidelity to your Son's Vicar on Earth.

*Our Father.*  *Hail Mary.*  *Glory Be.*

### V. Catholic Physicians' Annual Promises

**Moderator:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen.

**Moderator:** Lord God, our Father and Creator, we ask you to look mercifully upon your servants gathered here. They come together today freely and with joy to pledge themselves to your service as Catholic physicians. We ask you to forgive their sins, enlighten their minds, strengthen their wills, and fill them with your love.

Catholic physicians, you are called to imitate Christ, the Divine Physician, to make your work His work and His work yours. Do you accept the responsibilities of your apostolate?

**Physicians:** We do.

**Moderator:** Do you promise to embrace the spirit of poverty, giving of your time, professional skill, and material goods for those in need?

**Physicians:** We do.

**Moderator:** Do you promise to live chastely according to your state in life, especially in regard to your patients, who trustingly place themselves in your care?

**Physicians:** We do.

**Moderator:** Do you promise obedience to the Holy Father and the Bishops united with him, in matters of faith and morals, especially as
related to the science and practice of medicine?

Physicians: We do.

Moderator: Do you promise to reach out to other Catholic physicians to know them better, to work together with deeper mutual support and understanding, and to bring them to the apostolate?

Physicians: We do.

Moderator: Do you promise faithfully to adhere to the requirements of the apostolate, support the Catholic Physicians' Guild of Chicago, and to pray for all Catholic physicians?

Physicians: We do.

Our Father.  Hail Mary.  Glory Be.