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Along Highway and Byway

Catholic Physicians' Guild

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ALONG HIGHWAY AND BYWAY

Catholic physicians do not sufficiently appreciate the wonderful guidance which they receive from the Church on the ethical matters of our profession. It is pointed out to us in clear reason and in high morals, and not in mawkish sentimentality, what our proper attitude must be in the many controversies raised by our less favored confreres.

Recently an attending physician in a Catholic hospital was asked by some of the Catholic internes if it were proper to give contraceptive advice to a non-Catholic woman. The answer, of course, is "No," because no one is permitted to recommend a violation of the moral law, which transcends all others. Again the question was asked if the Catholic interne in a non-Catholic hospital may carry out the orders of his Chief to perform a therapeutic abortion or to prophylactically sterilize a woman after Caesarian section. The answer again is "No," because no one has the authority to command an immoral act.

Again the question of euthanasia looms up in the press. Our attitude is straightforward and honorable and in accord with the highest ethics of medicine. We find a prominent Protestant neurologist recommending the restricting of "mercy killings" to imbeciles and the hopelessly insane. He believes that "it would be unnecessary, impolitic, and therefore inadvisable to legalize euthanasia for those persons who having been well, are ill." He stated that he himself had danced with a patient who had been considered incurable. This non-Catholic physician has admirable views on many points for he disclaims credit for many of his cures and says that they are due to the Power above.

On the other hand, we find the opinion of a prominent Jewish neurologist whose words read like the doctrine of the Catholic Church, showing that in the authentic old and new dispensations the real ethics of our profession may be found.