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President's Page: Reality, Reverant Relevance and Reform

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President's Page



DR. O'LOUGHLIN

Reality, Reverant Relevance and Reform

Medicine has become more man-centered and interested in human basics of late. Honesty, integrity, perfectibility, death and immortality are *encourant*. Medical education is concerned with these matters as well, and sometimes as intensely, as with scientific and political concerns. Medical education should consider these matters also and it is an appropriate subject of concern for the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guild and for the medical schools. Tentative elective courses in Religion, Humanities, and Social Science are offered in some medical schools. Theology which has again only recently become university subject is having its hard knocks and Newman's idea of a university may not survive the current attacks on academic freedom. The reaction to an excess of student activism is itself excessive and can be dangerously restricted.

For the last ten years the younger members of the NFCPG have been trying to divert the organization's attention away from "Pelvic Morality" toward other problems of the day, more in keeping with Christ's admonition to love our brothers, neighbors and enemies. The recent successes of the "Abortion Lobby" caused great consternation. The encyclical *Humanae Vitae* severely tested their catholicity. It appears that even the Curia and the Pope cannot stay away from this area for long. Many are asking the Federation to assume a simple and definite position on *Humanae Vitae*. Some guilds warn us that all guilds must be consulted before we assume an official stance, especially one that might be contrary to Vatican Council II's *Constitution of the Church in the Modern World*. While all may see the strong hand of the Holy Spirit in that document, not all would make such a claim for Pope Paul's recent encyclical. It is obviously a closely reasoned treatise intended to clarify and teach the truths of the natural moral law. These

truths, proven from human experience and reason, must be seriously received, carefully considered and individually reconsidered or affirmed. We cannot have a corporate conscience here.

The program for the fall meeting published in the last issue was formed before the crisis concerning *Humanae Vitae* arose. It was not planned that discussions of authority, natural law, infallibility and etc., would be part of our considerations of medical education. However, it is probably inevitable that they will be referred to by nearly all speakers. No positions have been taken by any officers of the Guild and no resolutions or actions are being formulated at this time for consideration by that meeting on *Humanae Vitae*.

It is imperative, however, that each Catholic physician read the encyclical and commentaries upon it. Each of us must be prepared to discuss it intelligently with patients and colleagues. It is truly one of the most important documents of our day.

B. J. O'Loughlin, M.D.

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