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Catholic Physicians' Guild

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The Moderator's Message...

When Doctors Meet at Table

As an integral part of the observance of St. Luke's Day which many Guilds have been including in their annual program, members first meet at the Table of the Lord to receive the "Bread of Life" and then break bread at a Communion-breakfast or dinner. This sharing of a meal is to be highly commended not only for its emphasis on the spirit of "community" but also because of the opportunity it presents for the spiritual growth of the individual doctor.

We cannot help but be struck by the significant acts which Christ performed while at table. The first of His miracles was performed at a wedding banquet, an occasion which also highlighted His compassion for the needs of men and the influence of His Mother, Mary. While celebrating the Paschal Meal, the Son of God inaugurated the new Eucharistic Sacrifice, or Meal, as the Christian way to encounter and worship God, using the occasion to promulgate the Great Commandment, love of God and neighbor. And after the Resurrection, the disciples at Emmaus and the Apostles on the shores of the sea of Tiberias recognized the Risen Lord as He shared their food. These events recorded in salvation history emphasize not only the Sacred Meal which is the center of our Eucharistic Worship, they also recall that there is more sacredness attached to every meal than to any other human act.

The doctor, of all God's people, is privileged to have the most extensive daily contact with life in all its aspects. He knows not only the first breath of the infant and the ebbing life of the dying, he sees and shares the intervening struggle to protect and preserve any human life entrusted to his care. Such a man can easily discover in every meal an encounter with God, the Author of life, for the doctor is most aware that it is this gift of God's food which sustains human life.

Like the lovable Pope John, we all find a meal more enjoyable and more healthful when we can share both our food and our thoughts. And as we sit at table with family or friends, we encounter God in yet another way—the indwelling of His Spirit and His image are to be found in all who surround us. If God so vitally shares each meal with us, if we are conscious of this reality each time we sit at table, there will be growth in the great social responsibilities which are inherent in the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ, to love and to share. So fashioned, man's Communion with Christ will be an alliance which can truly change the world.

REVEREND KENNETH P. MACKINNON