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## From the Editor's Desk

John P. Mullooly

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## From the Editor's Desk



Between four and five hundred physicians, representing every continent with the exception of South America, gathered in Bombay, India from January 29 to February 1. They traveled great distances — from France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, England, the United States, Canada, Asia, Indonesia, Australia, Africa and Japan — because of the importance they attached to the 1978 meeting of the Federation Internationale des Associations Medicales Catholiques.

The Holy Father himself sent as his personal representative the Vatican's Undersecretary of State, because he felt the Congress and the topics to be discussed there were of the utmost importance. India's papal nuncio attended, as did that country's first cardinal.

FIAMC president Gino Papola, M.D., past president of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds, reported that there were discussions on every aspect of the quality of life — abortion, sterilization, euthanasia, natural family planning, the patient's right to refuse treatment, the effect of the national health policies of various countries on patient care.

He explained that all talks were instantly translated into four languages — French, German, English and Spanish.

Doctor Papola described India as "another world," a poor country whose poverty is apparent, but whose people are warm and seemingly happy. He noted that while Bombay is a large city with a great deal of overcrowding, one is surprised in traveling from place to place to notice large areas of non-habitation.

The FIAMC president said that a program by Mother Teresa was well-received and that she is doing a necessary job. Many people in India are born in the street, live in the street and die in the street. She

gives their death dignity and makes them feel someone loves them.

A paper given by Herbert Ratner, M.D., immediate past-president of the NFCPG, is reprinted in this issue of *Linacre Quarterly*.

Doctor Papola commented that the Congress was well-organized and was well-attended.

The strong feelings of the Catholic physicians who went to Bombay are apparent in the resolutions which were passed and which were sent to *Linacre* by Doctor Ratner, a member of the resolutions committee.

1. The Catholic doctors of the world proclaim their dedication to the promotion of the quality of life, which includes the dignity of human life from conception to natural death, and in all stages of health and disease.
2. Catholic doctors reiterate their firm stand against direct sterilization and most particularly against compulsory sterilization, as an affront to the fundamental rights of human beings as persons, and in this regard express their special admiration to the Catholic doctors, the other Catholic organizations, and the entire people of India for their courageous stand against this compulsion.
3. Catholic doctors reaffirm the need to contribute to the solution of community problems, with the recognition that all such efforts be for the primary benefit of the individual; and also reaffirm that Catholic professionals of life science, medicine, and other paramedical personnel be aware of and committed to the solution of the social problems of their countries.
4. Catholic doctors recognize that the doctor-patient relationship is one of equality at the human level, and that the patient has the right to accept or reject medical advice.
5. Catholic doctors accept the obligation to inform themselves about all aspects of Natural Family Planning to be able to serve the large numbers of people who are desperately seeking natural means for the solution of their human problems.

Such resolutions as these, reflecting the opinions of Catholic physicians from literally all over the world, must be a great source of strength and encouragement to all who respect life. It is most heartening to realize that in all countries, these Catholic doctors — who work hand-in-hand with God Himself in bringing life into the world, caring for it, healing it and easing it into eternity as peacefully as possible — are dedicated to bringing forth, maintaining and sustaining with dignity that life which comes to all people from God the Creator. Life is His gift, and for Him it must be cherished.

— John P. Mullooly, M.D.  
Editor