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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION TO THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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401--76th Street
Brooklyn 9, N. Y.

September 13, 1944.

DEAR DOCTOR:

Some thirteen years ago some members of the New York Guilds of Catholic Physicians met to consider what action could be taken to meet active and vigorous propaganda in favor of practices contrary to sound natural ethics and Catholic moral principles. These members conceived the idea of the formation and federation of a nation-wide chain of Guilds of Catholic Physicians. The object of this Federation was to promote moral principles in medical education and practice. It was also in the minds of some of the promoters of the Federation that a meeting of the members of these wide-spread guilds every year at the time and place of the meeting of the A. M. A. would be a concrete expression of Catholic Medical solidarity, would make possible an organic expression of the Catholic Medical fraternity on medico-moral problems, would be an effective means of counter-propaganda, and would give heart and comfort to those many non-Catholic physicians who were in agreement with their Catholic brethren on sound principles of medical education and practice.

A meeting was called at New York City which was attended by delegates of the local New York

Guilds and some delegates from other cities, notably Chicago. The first general meeting of the Federation was set for 1932. In December 1932, the first number of the LINACRE QUARTERLY appeared as the official organ of the Federation.

For the last three or four years, it has been evident at the meeting of those members of the Executive Committee who could be gathered from the New York Guilds at the call of the President of the Federation, that the Federation was not only not attaining the fulness of fruits which led to its formation, but was actually threatened with extinction. It became increasingly difficult for a few busy physicians in New York to keep the Federation not only functioning but expanding by the active promotion of the formation of new guilds.

About two years ago the partial executive committee functioning in New York voted to ask the National Catholic Welfare Conference to assume the sponsorship and direction of the Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds, to promote its objectives, and to establish a national office of the Federation in the national offices of the N.C.W.C. at Washington, D. C. It was thought that the N.C.W.C. would supply the resources and the stability without which the Federation was on the verge of dissolution. There were the added difficulties presented by

the editorial and financial problems of the LINACRE QUARTERLY which could be made into a unique and outstanding magazine representing the scientific and medico-moral thought of American Catholic physicians.

The LINACRE QUARTERLY probably would not have survived to date had it not been for the magnificent devotion and self-sacrifice of Dr. Joseph A. Dillon, one time President of the Federation. When the LINACRE was in financial doldrums, Dr. Dillon took over the business management and saved it financially. When it was in sore need of an editor, Dr. Dillon added the cares of an editor to his problems as President of the Federation and business manager of the QUARTERLY. When Dr. Dillon died in May, 1939, his wife took over the whole care of the LINACRE and has carried on ever since with no recompense whatsoever except the gratitude of the acting executive committee of the Federation which would have been lost without her magnificent self-sacrifice. Dr. and Mrs. Dillon kept the LINACRE alive by doing all the office work of the LINACRE to the extent of addressing and mailing the copies.

In the past few years the acting executive committee had become more and more concerned with the problem of keeping alive the Federation which really is the expression of a truly great idea to make effective the medico-moral principles of the Catholic medical fraternity in an increasingly

pagan world. It was a consideration of the increasing problems and difficulties which led the acting executive committee to approach the National Catholic Welfare Conference for a solution.

Negotiations with the N.C.W.C. with interruptions for one reason or another were continued for over a year to no conclusion. Finally last year the Catholic Hospital Association was approached on the subject of the possibility of the Association doing for the Federation in the line of sponsorship and promotion what it had been hoped would have been accomplished by the active guidance of the N.C.W.C. The N.C.W.C. was asked if it would agree to and approve of such a solution of the difficulties of the Federation. On April 18, 1944, the Administrative Board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference formally considered the matter and voted to ask the officers of the Catholic Hospital Association to assume responsibility for the management and administration of the Federated Catholic Physicians' Guilds.

The following is a copy of the Minutes of the Administrative Board Meeting, April 18, 1944:

"Bishop Alter moved

That the Administrative Board of Bishops request the Catholic Hospital Association to establish a form of relationship with the Physicians' Guild, subject to the

Administrative Board of the Catholic Hospital Association, and to take over the editorship and management of the LINACRE QUARTERLY. The President of the Catholic Hospital Association to act as Moderator of the Guild.

Seconded by Bishop Ryan, the motion carried."

It is now time after these preliminary arrangements to take a poll of the complete executive committee of the Federation. The partial executive committee acting under the leadership of the President of the Federation in New York, consisting of the presidents of the local guilds and additional and interested members of the guild appointed by the President has never considered itself fully and completely legal. The administration of the Federation in this quasi-legal fashion was the result of conditions of time and space. But now the President of the Federation and this acting executive committee wishes to gain the approval of the whole executive committee to this plan of transfer of the Federation to the sponsorship of the Catholic Hospital Association. That whole committee as you know consists in the executive officers of the Federation together with the presidents and one delegate of all the local guilds. We are sending out this letter to the active members of the Federation, viz., the guilds which are mem-

bers of the Federation by the payment of their dues. We ask the president of each local guild and the delegate member of that guild to officially vote on the questions submitted below.

Because of the transfer of the Federation to the sponsorship of the Catholic Hospital Association it is desirable and necessary to elect Father Alphonse Schwitalla, S.J., President of the Catholic Hospital Association and Dean of St. Louis Medical School as the new Moderator. Father Ignatius W. Cox, S.J., is tendering his resignation from this office which he has held since the formation of the Federation. Father Schwitalla will thus be able to act as a connecting link between the Federation and the Association. It will be necessary also to ask Father Schwitalla to make provision for the editorship and management of the LINACRE QUARTERLY either as himself the editor or by the appointment of others as a board of editors. Some of the points taken up in this letter were discussed at a special meeting of representatives of the Federation and the Association, held at the Palmer House, Chicago, Illinois, June 11, 1944. The Federation was represented by Dr. J. Masterson, President of the Federation and Dr. Thomas Brennan, recent president of the Federation. The Association was represented by the Reverend Alphonse M. Schwitalla, S.J., President of the Catholic Hospital Association and M. R. Kneif, ex-

ecutive secretary of the Association.

The proposed changes will locate the National Office of the Federation at St. Louis, a central place. They will give stability to the Federation and make it possible, we hope, to fulfill the ideals which brought it into existence; new guilds should spring up under the active sponsorship of the Catholic Hospital Association, and the LINACRE ought to develop into a really splendid magazine because of its unique character. Those who have actively worked for the formation and development of the Federation feel that they can no longer carry on and the proposals made are an endeavor to insure the life and development of the Federation.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you approve of the proposal to have the officers of the Catholic Hospital Association assume responsibility for the business management and administration of the Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds?
2. Do you approve of the transfer of the LINACRE QUARTERLY to the Reverend Alphonse Schwitalla as editor and manager, or to be provided for by him according to his discretion?

3. Do you approve of the choice of Father Alphonse Schwitalla as the Moderator of the Federation?

We hope that thus as far as may be the new arrangement will be legalized. We have never yet had a full meeting of the executive board and the functions of this committee have been practically carried on by the small committee functioning in New York. A meeting of the full executive committee can be sought next Spring, when the A.M.A. meets in New York. We ask for an answer as soon as possible so that the October number, which Mrs. Dillon is not preparing, may be gotten out by Father Schwitalla.

Very sincerely yours,

JOHN J. MASTERSON,
President.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above letter was sent to the Guilds who are in good standing through payment of their Federation dues. As we go to press, three Guilds have answered. The President is awaiting replies from the other Guilds.

As not enough replies were received to date to legalize the proposed transfer immediately, your present editor has prepared this number.