

August 1978

## From the Episcopal Advisor

Nicholas T. Elko

Follow this and additional works at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq>

---

### Recommended Citation

Elko, Nicholas T. (1978) "From the Episcopal Advisor," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 45: No. 3, Article 2.  
Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol45/iss3/2>

## The Creator's Maintenance Men

Nicholas T. Elko, D.D.

*The auxiliary archbishop of Cincinnati, Archbishop Elko, episcopal advisor to the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds, has a wide background in oriental studies. He has been notably active in the rehabilitation of Iron Curtain people and priests.*



A physician treats ailments of the body best when he indirectly assists the patient's spiritual make-up.

Medical orders to avoid abuse of the body require will power of the spirit on the part of the patient. All verbal or written directions, given for healing, are of no avail unless the will of the individual abides by the directive will of the practitioner. Mutually hoped for recovery is fortified by mutual cooperation of the one who gives and the one who takes advice.

The termination of abuses in food, drink or other habits, needs control. The physician, a healer of the body like a confessor healing the soul, gives counsel. An old Latin saying, "Per quidquid peccavit per id puniter," is so true. We are punished by the very thing with which we have sinned.

Most maladies are not divinely sent, but humanly brought about. The physical problems of the body and the disturbances of the mind are not caused by the Creator, but by the creature.

The wonderful, chemical, biological vessel structured in a perfectly molded skeletal body frame is a gift of the Maker. It will function well in its journey through life unless there is human failure.

The massive 747 jet airplane is the delight of many pilots because it operates so well when properly guided. However, the controls are so delicate and sensitive that they react immediately even to a single finger pressure. A light touch can sway and change the course, left or right, of this perfectly constructed giant.

Thus, too, the God-made body of man normally is so well formed that it, too, is most sensitive to even the slightest changes in the respiratory, circulatory and chemical systems. The possessor of the body pilots his own destiny twenty-four hours a day. He shows due appreciation of the workings of this perfect structure and its mechanisms. Being at the controls of this perfected human machine, he must be alert to the directives for daily landings and take-offs, so to speak. He listens to the directions of the tower that relay the course of his physical operation. These are the medical men. He, likewise, relies on the manual that the Maker of his body gives him. The blood pressure, temperature and all physical reactions can be important, so he takes care to entrust himself into the hands of the Designer and Maker Who is God. In turn, God has associates — the physicians who are His maintenance men. They check, correct and direct what is to be done for the safety of the earthly traveler.

Saints are referred to in the Catholic Mass as “those who have done the will of God.” They are the ones who surround God in heaven because they followed directions in their life on earth.

Not all physicians are saints, but in my opinion, many are. They are spiritual men because they strive to do the will of the Maker of the body in treating the entire individual, physically and mentally. As a Catholic doctor of medicine it is not easy, but even difficult when in our modern world, like polluted air entering our breathing apparatus, there is so much foreign matter infecting our physical structure, because wholesome living and controlled direction of life are no longer fashionable and are replaced by immoral living.

The man with a stethoscope and a high, wide and deep knowledge of medicine and surgery is endeavoring to give normalcy to those whose living has been abnormal. There is only one way for a common meeting ground. It is the compliance of the one will to the other. This is spiritual.

To bring overheated, immoral temperatures down to normal, there is need for spiritual cooling. To keep cool and remain tranquil, there is need to submit oneself to the security of the One Who made the body and can remake it when it lends itself to necessary repair. The One Who established the laws of nature gives His earthly associate, the physician who works with nature, an assist in returning disciplinary control over disruptive acts against nature which have harmed the body.

Which physician has greater promise of healing a patient — the one who combats physical ailments without the cooperative good will of

the patient, or the one who has the physical adeptness of the body fortified and unified with the mental disposition of both the patient and the physician?

A physician's task becomes frustrating when there is a stone wall of cynical indifference characterizing a depressed person, one who is totally void of good will.

The Catholic Church in its doctrinal teaching refers to Christ as desirous that all men be saved. It quotes His words, "All sins are forgiven except the sin against the Holy Spirit." What sin is this? It occurs when a person defies God and refuses His means of salvation.

No doubt a physician might use a comparable application about saving a patient, namely, any or all abuses of a physical body if halted in time can enjoy correction providing the patient does not refuse to trust the doctor's directives needed for recovery.

---

## Letters...

### Letter from Finland

Contraception is one of the activities expressly carried out under the National Health System according to current Finnish law. The law provides free initiation of contraception, i.e., the first prescription for the pill or the first IUD is free of charge. After the birth of every child all mothers are to be reminded and informed of contraceptive techniques, and this information is effectively spread through the maternity centers, which cover over 90 per cent of mothers. After the birth of a child the mother gets a social benefit in the form of a "mother's package." This contains material to a value of some 300 Fmk necessary for the care of the newborn, such as blankets, diapers, booklets on infant feeding and — condoms.

This might all seem very efficient. However, only some 10 to 20 per cent of the women of childbearing age are covered by the NHS. Some attend private practitioners, some never use contraception, which results in abortions, often multiple. The abortion rate is, however, going down, which is a posi-

tive trend seen only in Finland among the countries where abortion is very liberal. The figures indicate a reduction from 23,000 to 20,000 abortions from 1973 to 1976. The annual birth rate is about 65,000. This decrease in abortions is reflected in an increase in the use of contraception. The use of the pill has increased by 20 per cent and the IUD by 30 per cent from 1975 to 1976.

Currently there is a case being tried where a (non-Catholic) pharmacist refused to dispense contraceptive pills on account of her religious conviction. The Supreme Court finally decided that this was not sufficient reason for withdrawing the pharmacist's license, which was the original stand taken by the Ministry of Health. The case is not yet closed, however, as the Supreme Court has provided the Ministry of Health with the opportunity of re-examining the case, "as it might give cause for other measures on behalf of the Ministry of Health."

The liberal practice of contraception, which is all too typical of the