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From the Episcopal Advisor: The Physician - A Remembered Symbol of Goodness

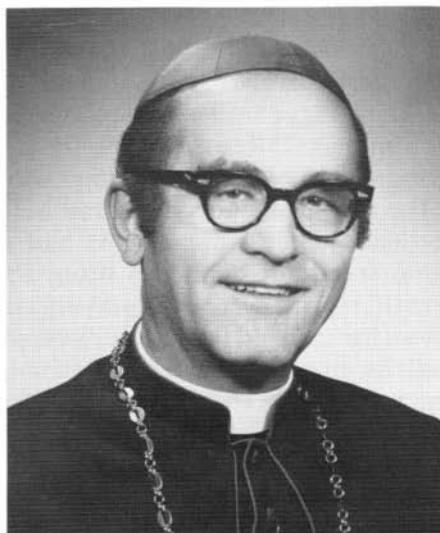
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From the Episcopal Advisor



The Physician — A Remembered Symbol of Goodness

Although a tablet of the Ten Commandments stands above the podium where our Supreme Court justices sit, the commandments are not all followed. Judicial decisions allow the breaking of eight of the ten legally.

You can kill babies by abortion. You can commit adultery and peddle pornography. God's name can be mentioned in vain; one can blaspheme publicly. Children are not obligated to honor their parents' directives on morality. They can even sue. The Sabbath is no longer cherished as God's day. Covetousness and greed are accepted as commercial enterprise on Wall Street.

We do believe in democracy and separation of Church from state, but why should we believe in God's separation from state? "God Bless America" can be sung, but will not be effective because God cannot cooperate in evil.

How does an American physician, as well as other citizens of integrity, go through the years of his short lifetime? Doesn't he have to make a resolution with God's words in the Bible, "It is better to trust in God than men?" Our very dollars of all denominations carry the motto, "In God we trust". If we believe in the power of the dollar, why not believe in the power of God in America?

It is a challenge to physicians whether to be liked by patients or loved by God. One cannot serve two masters.

Pope John Paul II, Feb. 22, 1987, in a letter published by the Doctrine of Faith Congregation, gives a warning for today's field of medicine!

“Remember, what is getting to be technically possible in the field of medicine is not always morally permissible.”

On his visit to the United States in Phoenix, Arizona in September of last year, the Holy Father, addressing 3,000 medical personnel, reminded them of the conflict in today’s humanistic, agnostic and atheistic environment. “Research yes, it is recommended, but insist on the sacredness of human life. Compassion is the heart of medical science.”

The physician undergoes a test of faith when on one side of him are the unethical medical movements and on the other side, Judeo-Christian moral standards. This can bring about a mental stress. He might ask himself, especially if he is a praying man from his early days and in medical school has enjoyed the Creator’s supplementary help, what can he do now? Shall he go with the crowd, the unbelievers, and gain monetary benefits which others are enjoying, or shall he hold fast to the foundation of faith which will give him peace of mind and save his soul?

Why has the Hippocratic Oath become dormant in the minds of so many? Why has the dignity of the human person been cut so low that aborted fetuses are allowed to be for sale, in parts, and refrigerated? To this, the physician without a conscience will answer that because the law of the land allows abortion, it also allows piecemeal fragmenting of fetuses. Those who defy nature and morality, are themselves cut off from the Mystical Body of Christ. They have sold their birthright to a noble profession. Doing this, they are no longer in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. They remain in the basin of men separated from God. They will never enjoy the mental tranquillity which St. Luke, the model and holy physician, repeats so often in his gospel quoting Christ: “My peace be with you. The peace I give is not as the world gives.”

Again, St. Luke writes in the Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 11, that those who are healing “are laying their hands on the sick and they know that the hands of the Lord are with them.”

Would it not be wonderful for God’s co-worker, the physician, the dedicated practitioner who has helped ailing mortals in this valley of tears, to bridge himself into the rainbow of Heaven when his own heart stops and his life ends?

Be of good cheer, you good persons in the medical profession! Continue the line of physicians through the centuries who are blessed and are saints. Pope Paul beatified Dr. Joseph Mosconi last November, and his reason is because “he integrated his Catholic faith with respect for life. He collaborated with the Creator in the redemptive work of God. The suffering of the sick person moved him like the cry of a brother. He acted according to God’s designs.”

As a professor in a medical school, he taught that “We must remember it is not only the bodies that you treat but also souls with charity and not only with a prescription to the pharmacist.”

The Holy Father continued, “Not only science but charity, transforms the world. Only a few become famous in sciences but all the God-fearing

can remain remembered symbols of goodness forever. Because death is only a stage, a metamorphosis for a higher ascent to eternity, if they dedicate themselves to doing good and not evil.”

Blessed Doctor Mosconi died at the age of 47 on Aug. 17, 1917. The day he expired, he had been attending patients in the hospitals all day long. He went home feeling ill, went to his room, sat down, and died a peaceful death. How wonderful to be escorted into heaven by the angel who was his guardian all life long.

Good physicians doing their best and letting God do the rest, can join a long line of saints as they keep marching on to God's eternal kingdom. Why deny yourself this privilege?

Great medical persons must feel like Dr. Robert Gale, the American who was rushed to the Soviet Union to assist survivors of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Aiding in the transferring of bone marrow of victims, he realized the helplessness of the situation and, according to reports, stated, “When only physical strength is considered a standard for life and not the spiritual, we are nearing the end of civilization.”

— Most Reverend Nicholas T. Elko, D.D.

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