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Doctors at Current Crossroads

Most Rev. Nicholas T. Elko, D.D., LL.D., Litt. D.

Archbishop Elko, episcopal advisor to the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds, gave this talk at the group's national convention in October, 1978.



Physicians, like everyone else, find themselves at current crossroads. It is a decision whether to stay with God and the Church or go in the direction where sin is legalized. The one route is material, the other spiritual. At such an intersection, one cannot arrive at his heavenly destination on his own travel map. He needs an official ecclesiastical one like an AAA, not always like the AMA.

It is perplexing for a practitioner to work elbow to elbow with an abortionist, a euthanasianist, a contraceptionist and keep both his faith and his position. The market price of the soul drops when God's laws are lowered before states' laws that allow violation of the Decalogue. A physician is required even by his Hippocratic oath to save all life where he can. A Catholic practitioner is obliged not only to evaluate his own soul, but the soul of his patient.

There is a battling confrontation between state standards and Church standards of morality. The state allows sexual promiscuity to rest, in many cases, in the hands of two consenting adults. The Church declares one must have a consenting God.

If a physician is not God-fearing, he could become a murderer. Pius XII stated, "A physician's activities constantly move in the sphere of

moral order. In no intervention can he be kept outside the sphere of morals, ethics and religion.”

This same pontiff at the proclamation of the Dogma of the Assumption said, “Christ placed human flesh in the context of eternity.”

Today we live in an era where there is not the glorification of the human body by God but the deification of the body by man.

With the rapid diffusion of Marxist atheism around the world, there is also the spread of Marxist biology, scientific conclusions without philosophical or theological conclusions being drawn.

Researchers who claim to be carrying forward the study of genes and chromosomes into the molecular structure of life are really going backward when they do not give the general populace their knowledge joined with faith and the mystery of life. In fact, they cause a malignancy of spirit, insisting that all directional signs read, “roads of mere chance,” and never “roads of eternal providential guidance.” Is it not a falsified scientific objective when no credit is given to an originator of all elements?

The doctor, when a man of faith in a creator, proves that man is not just a by-product of accident. Modern geneticists and microcellular biologists would do best if they disproved the Darwinian theory by pointing to the orderly course and beauty of design in nature. Thereby, this physician who has been given a special privilege by God to preserve life among so many cascading impediments and obstructions is a pursuer of maintaining creation by this honored proximity to the divine.

At the Moscow University Medical School, a recent visitor tabulated commonplace whispered comments especially among the female students, who numbered over 900. Overheard was the phrase, “dolzen byt sozdatel (there must be a creator); otherwise how could the human body assemble itself?”

Quickly the authorities in the Kremlin denounced and penalized all such suspects. The logic of scientific medical and genetic research — the very logic impressed on young minds — rebels against Marxist biology.

Honest scientists break with Soviet Communism when, as in the Lysenko case, the Marxist biologists denounced geneticist theories that sponsor the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Atheists give no allowance to an inherent orderly natural activity credited to a creator.

In the mode of Nietzsche, the philosopher of cynicism, Marxists seek to crowd into the minds of their students false premises that man alone makes all the laws. Yet the agile, exploratory minds of young scientists see beyond such a human interdict against true knowledge. Man cannot pass himself off as the “be all and know all,” with no imputability for his actions, for he is not his own creator. He is not without a beginning. Atheists try to establish dry, dialectic, material-

istic, spiritless conclusions. The act of an imperious authority against the conception of an eternal being can never last forever. Mere impersonal arrival in scientific development has no heart. It can never be science for the sake of science, but science for the sake of mankind. This supersedes heartless, barren theories, for it has a virtuous end.

This brings on brutality and persecution as by-products of scientific research in Communist Russia rather than the expansion of goodness of one man to another, aiding humanity by giving it spirit. Social consequences must be considered. The ultimate goal of human existence needs glorification of the soul through physical edification of the body, a development of the mind entwined in the instruction of truth in preparation for a beatific life in eternity.

Louis Pasteur, a daily Mass attendant, was a model scientist. He showed that life has a magnificent value and it is a priceless state wherein man gives himself to his Creator to daily supplement the creature with grace, a sustained preservation of mental tranquility that comes only through the health of the mind and the body.

We pity the unbeliever. For him, life is merely a long chain of unending problems with no higher power to go to for solutions and healing.

For the believer there is a higher source for security. It is given by the One Who gave us the laws of nature and placed the planets in their orbit. He can bring solutions to problems even if it takes all eternity.

Pitiful mankind is exhausting itself with meager reliance on its own limited, finite restricted self, on human discoveries rather than divine renewed creativity, on opinions that are doubtful rather than decrees that are absolute.

By the very fact that men scratch out new discoveries constantly, experience should bring realization that the source of nature, the Creator, still has an unlimited, infinite, endless supply of power and elements with which we are not yet familiar and He doles them out only as He sees fit to those who are fit to receive them. So why should the physician or scientist travel the lonely road without the benefit of the Divine Guide and risk damnation if he can have salvation?