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## Letters to the Editor

Catholic Physicians' Guild

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# Letters to the Editor

## Beginning of Human Life

### To the Editor:

German claims that "The Beginning of Individual Human Life" (*Linacre Quarterly*, May, 1997) does not occur until Syngamy, some 20 hours after *first contact* of fertilization. His reasoning is that the "parental chromosomes are still segregated." Does this mean that during subsequent mitotic divisions when chromosomes are separated from each other that the life process is suspended? German also claims that at *first contact* of fertilization there is only "a future *possible* individual human life." I think not. He obviously did not read my Letter to the Editor in *The Linacre Quarterly* of August, 1993, in which I discussed the reasons why Syngamy is not to be considered as the beginning of individual human life. I will say again, that under the conditions we have come to understand and embrace as normal, all of development after first contact is a *fait accompli* and a certainty. The life process is not held in suspension for 20 hours until syngamy. *First contact* reestablishes the *continuum* of life, which is not arbitrarily suspended at any subsequent time until death. German ignores this scientific fact.

- C. Ward Kischer, Ph.D.  
Tucson, AZ

## Homosexuality and the APA

### To the Editor:

I found Mark Kahabka's assessments of GAT counseling and reparative therapy generally balanced and helpful (*Linacre Quarterly*, Aug 1997). However, I was surprised that he seemed to accept the old canard that the change in the APA's classification of homosexuality was the result of organized political pressure by gay organizations.

Although he mentions the pioneering work of Dr. Evelyn Hooker in one of his footnotes, he fails to mention that it was her research with homosexual and heterosexual men and the inability of experts to distinguish among them solely on the basis of psychological tests that played a major role in the decision of the APA to declassify homosexuality as a mental illness in 1973.

As early as 1956 Hooker had published "The Adjustment of the Male Overt Homosexual" which documented normal psychological adjustment patterns in nonclinical samples of male homosexual men. Based on that work, she was appointed chair of the NIMH's Task Force on Homosexuality in 1967. It was this kind of research that motivated the APA to declassify homosexuality. Obviously the gay community strongly supported such a change and worked for its acceptance, but was hardly responsible for it in terms of the scientific research and the empirical data upon which it

was professionally based.

Kahabka's claim that the Church teaches that the homosexual orientation is "intrinsically disordered" also is not quite accurate. The actual wording is "objectively disordered"; the word "intrinsically" is applied only to homosexual acts. What "objectively disordered" actually means is a subject of continued discussion among theologians. What it does not mean is that the orientation is a form of physical or emotional illness.

**- Robert Nugent, SDS  
Baltimore, MD**

### **St. Luke's Medical Association**

#### **To the Editor:**

You are probably aware by now that the Catholic Physicians' Guild in Rochester, NY has changed its name to:

*The St. Luke's Medical Association*

The diocesan newspaper characterized the action of the Association as a "break from [the] diocese" (*Courier Journal*, December 18, 1997). The truth, however, is that the Association simply assumed the same status as numerous organizations in the diocese (e.g., the St. Vincent de Paul Society, Marriage Encounter, the Legion of Mary, etc.). By changing its title and amending its bylaws, *The St. Luke's Medical Association* now enjoys the same freedom as these other lay organizations. Relative to their activity, the bishop neither authorizes nor sponsors any of their speakers, programs or literature. Such is now

the case with *The St. Luke's Medical Association*.

While it seeks to be of service to physicians and medical personnel in living the Catholic faith, the Association also aims through lectures and seminars to acquaint the wider community with papal and magisterial teaching in the field of medical ethics. We look forward also to continuing our mission that the poor may be assisted, the confused enlightened, and the suffering relieved.

We ask for your continued support and fellowship. Our dues are \$45 per year.

Send any correspondence to:

St. Luke's Medical Association  
909 W. Main St., Suite 108  
Rochester, NY 14611

Thank you and God bless you always.

**- Michael Aiello, M.D.  
President**