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President's Letter

Charles P. Prezzia,

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Dr. Charles P. Prezzia Accepts CMA Presidency

Dr. Charles Prezzia, of Pittsburgh, assumed the office of President during the 2000 Annual meeting of the Catholic Medical Association. What follows are excerpts from Dr. Prezzia's acceptance speech presented October 7, 2000 at the LeMont Restaurant.



Your Excellency Archbishop Lozano-Barragan, Fr. Soto, Fr. Gould, distinguished members of clergy, Senator and Mrs. Santorum, conference faculty, distinguished past Presidents, fellow physicians and supporters of the Catholic Medical Association and families and friends, I extend my personal welcome and a welcome on behalf of the Catholic Medical Association to the Annual Banquet and Installation of Officers taking place in this beautiful scenic backdrop on Mount Washington overlooking the city of Pittsburgh and the confluence of the Three Rivers. I hope you have all enjoyed the meeting thus far. I thank you for the sacrifices you have made to attend and contribute to this meeting.

It is traditional at this time that the incoming President comment on what he would like to see the CMA accomplish during his tenure. Given what I regard the importance of our Keynote Address tonight by Senator and Mrs. Santorum, I promise you I will be brief. However, prior to my comments, I really think I have to acknowledge and thank the people that made this meeting run as well as others who supported me during this time and others.

First is God Himself who through his Incarnation, Sacrifice on Calvary, and Resurrection as well as through the re-presentation of that Sacrifice in the Mass provides us all with the spiritual nourishment we need in this fight of the Culture of Life against the Culture of Death. Second is that invisible communion of angels and saints which as St. John teaches us in the New Testament supports us with their intercessions.

Finally, as you can imagine there is a visible group of people who devoted a great deal of time, effort and prayer to organizing this conference behind the scenes. If you are mentioned and present, I would like you to briefly stand.

Ruth Darragh without whom this meeting would never gotten off the ground. Ruth kept the local planning committee and myself focused and on track as well coordinating the many complex details that it takes to make a meeting of this type. In addition, I would like to thank Dan, her husband, who sacrificed time with Ruth. -----Bob Saxer, you need to find a Ruth and Dan Darragh for the CMA meeting next year.

Sondra Moss and her CME staff from Mercy hospital who took care of essen-

tially all the registration, continuing education requirements, brochure and program mailing, etc. for this meeting as well as handling speaker requests and a myriad of other details. Bob you need to find a Sondra Moss, also.

Dr. Ken Garver and his wife, Betty Lee, who were instrumental in assisting with this meeting as far back as three years ago when I still lived in Toledo, Ohio. You both are certainly an inspiration to myself, my wife, and our family.

Dr Bob Carroll, and his wife, Rusty, who assisted in the planning and organizing and as well as volunteering anytime there was a need to accomplish time-critical tasks. They also put us into contact with Ruth Darragh.

Dr. Robert Lee and his wife, Kathleen, who organized legions of medical students to promote this meeting as well as hand stuffing the 'goody bags'.

Dr Kathleen Shepard, President of the local Pittsburgh guild who gave willingly of her time to plan and organize the liturgies, obtain nursing CEUs, and promote this conference in numerous ways. In addition, her husband, Dean Nicholas Cafarti of the Duquesne School of Law, obtained the necessary application for CLE credits as well as the support of Duquesne University for this conference.

Dr. Brian Donnelly who initiated and provided the babysitting services and Dr. Feczko (?Fechko) who devoted his time and energy.

Dr. Larry Lyons and his wife, Patty, who not only assisted in the organization and funding of this meeting, but served as our personal representative and escort for His Excellency Archbishop Lozano-Barragan and his assistant, Fr. Soto.

I would also like to thank Bishop Wuerl and all the representatives of the diocese of Pittsburgh who assisted in this meeting. Bishop Wuerl was originally scheduled to be with us but was called to Rome for the Jubilee Celebration of Bishops tomorrow. Auxiliary Bishop Zubick has graciously agreed to be our celebrant for the White Mass tomorrow. Fr. Frank Almade served as the diocesan representative for the Archbishop during his visit. Fr. Larry DiNardo who is my pastor and also the Vicar for Canonical Affairs gave us the necessary permission for the Masses as well as faculties for visiting priests and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. In addition, Mr. Chuck Moody of the Pittsburgh Catholic gave us absolutely wonderful coverage for this event. I am sure I did not cover everyone from the diocese and would like to extend my sincere thanks to all.

I also thank my employer, USX Corporation, which has supported me both in terms of grants for this meeting and the necessary time allowance for it. In particular I would like to acknowledge Tom Usher who is Chairman of the Board, Paul Wilhelm who is vice-Chairman of the board and President of US Steel Group as well as Tom Sterling, Jim Garraux, Jim Hamilton and my own staff – many of whom are present here tonight.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge a few people without whom I would not be here in either a literal or figurative sense. Those people are my mother, my deceased father, my mother-in-law, my deceased father-in-law, my

brother David, brother Paul and his wife Jill, and my sister-in-law Evelyn. In my immediate family, there are my children Paul, Charles, Anna, John Paul Roger, Maria, Claire, David, and Rosemary. And finally and most importantly my wife, Karen, who was canonized when she married me and who is a continual source of inspiration to me.

Now for my comments which as I promised will be brief. By definition they are my goals to which I believe that the Lord has called me after thought and prayer. However, I hope and think these goals are in common with those of our general membership and consistent with CMA vision as already defined by the board of Directors. These three goals are simple but encompassing and are as follows:

1. Increase the realization in Catholic physicians and allied healthcare workers as to our vocation regarding those professions and especially our overall vocation to be saints. This will require prayer, fasting, and the use of the Sacraments. It will also require familiarity with Catholic medical-moral principles as well as the defined dogma and moral teaching of the Magisterium upon which they rest. Finally, our vocation requires us to be experienced in apologetics, not apologies, in order to advance our principles in the public forum. This will require us to network with and support those organizations that provide those services.

2. Increase the level of cooperation with other Catholic healthcare organizations in areas that we have in common and to do the same with non-Catholic physician groups and healthcare organizations in areas where we agree without compromising or trivializing our principles, beliefs, and theological differences. For guidance in this area, I will look to the actual teaching Magisterium of Church which in turn is based upon the wellspring of Revelation including both Sacred Oral and Sacred Written Tradition. I will especially refer to the documents *Ut Unum Sunt* and *Dominus Jesus*, which I would encourage all members to read. To paraphrase Bishop Wuerl in his Nov. 5, 1999, editorial in the *Pittsburgh Catholic*, we are "bless(ed) with many Catholic health care facilities and a large number of doctors, nurses, and health care professionals whose personal commitment to the Gospel of Christ is evident and whose collaboration with Catholic Health care institutions makes visible and effective...the Gospel mandate."

3. Increase the effectiveness of our administrative office and fiscal accountability to better serve our members:

- to accomplish goals 1 and 2,
- to increase our membership,
- and to provide our membership with appropriate support.

I ask your prayers and thank you for your attentiveness.

Dr. Charles P. Prezzia
President