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Message From the Spiritual Advisor

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Message from the Spiritual Advisor



Every physician's ideal is to accomplish good, restore the sick to health, and bring joy and comfort to the hearts of his patients. He also hopes that through his tireless studies, and with the grace of God, he might develop a technique or procedure that would help him and his fellow colleagues in the science of healing.

The doctors' heroes are those extraordinary persons such as Dr. Louis Pasteur, Dr. Jonas Salk, and others whose contributions to the world community are truly legacies of greatness.

Today, many physicians are stifled with fear as they recognize that actions intended as good may lead to a malpractice suit. While malpractice doesn't seem to mean what it says — "practicing evil" — the end result from such a legal contest can be totally damaging to the practitioner whose whole life is dedicated to helping others.

Legislatures have tried hard to explain law on a rational level. However, in many cases they have lost sight of the effect this has on the person. For example, most everyone agrees that pornography and drugs are harmful to children, yet the law is unable to cope with these questions, and when it does, it loses sight of human values. In their struggle to rationalize truth into neat pragmatic legal formulas that will be socially acceptable, legislatures witness the individual victimized in the process.

The Supreme Court has consistently maintained that one is not a person until outside the womb, and no physician can deny that life which is conceived in the Fallopian tubes is human, so the struggle for the protection of life is still a relevant issue.

Such controversies have led to the great schism between physicians and lawyers. The result is devastating to all of society. Both professions, unquestionably most revered and highly esteemed, find themselves totally at odds. Courts in deciding lucrative claims make fine distinctions on such sensitive issues as the "rights of the human body" vs. "just plain human rights"; "Which is evil, killing the person or keeping him alive?"; "Why is the brain wave of the fetus not recognized as being that of a human person whereas the brain wave of the human out of the womb is?"; "When does death occur?" Problems become even more complex with the intervention of third parties. Thus, professional counselors are faced with these issues as well as amoral groups such as insurance companies who decide "how much" and "to whom" payments are to be made for the "human services."

Perhaps there should be time taken out, a moratorium called — a chance to reflect, to call on the Spirit, and invite the community to contribute its input for the resolutions of these conflicts. This could be a time to accept the challenge of the '80's by dialoguing with lawyers and physicians as well as theologians and counselors. Interested members of the community who show a sincere concern in searching for answers to this dilemma should be invited to participate. Together, the values of the legal profession as well as the expertise of moralists, physicians and the rights of patients should be upheld.

The medical profession is truly a noble one and its members are genuinely needed and respected. However, the fear of "being sued" for doing one's job the best he knows how should not preoccupy his mind so that it becomes the most perplexing problem of his vocation.

As men of faith, believing in the Spirit and doing the work of God, you need not fear, for in continuing your mission of healing, strive with other professions for better cooperation and understanding. Exercise your skills fearlessly for the good of mankind, and encourage counselors as well as theologians to be peace-makers assisting the physician-patient relationship toward harmony.

These are indeed troublesome times, and as all dedicated people involved in human services, the wholistic individual is of paramount importance. Working together toward this same objective, all of mankind can be beneficiaries of the arts and sciences, of law and theology, and of the best that God has given to man in His universe.

Is this a dream? Perhaps so, but before there is a change for the better you must first have a dream.

— Msgr. Dino Lorenzetti
