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Donald G. McCarthy

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Nostalgia: The First Decade of the Federation and *Linacre Quarterly*

Rev. Donald G. McCarthy, Ph.D.

Father McCarthy is director of education at the Pope John Center in St. Louis.

Bumper stickers often capture wit and wisdom. For example, "Nostalgia isn't what it used to be." That may be true. But reviewing the years 1932 to 1942, the first decade of *Linacre Quarterly* and of the Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds will offer some first class nostalgia in this golden anniversary year.

Which guilds actually founded the Federation? The first issue of *Linacre Quarterly*, December, 1932, lists Boston, Brooklyn, Bronx, Chicago, Manhattan and Philadelphia. An extension committee started work in June, 1933. By 1935 *Linacre* reached a circulation of 3,000 copies. That year, Dr. Allan Roy Dafoe, of Dionne quintuplet fame, was quoted in the journal about childbirth and mothering. An appeal also appeared for physicians to work with the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps). Annual subscriptions were 50¢ the first two years, but doubled in 1934 to \$1! Both the Federation and the *Linacre Quarterly* were born in the Great Depression.

The Federation expanded rapidly at first, and then more gradually. In 1934, a guild was formed in Sullivan and Rockland Counties, New York, and then others in San Francisco, Little Rock, Belleville, Illinois, Washington, D.C., and Wichita. Cleveland and Great Falls, Montana, joined in 1935. The following year New Orleans and Rochester, N.Y. formed guilds. In 1937, Dubuque, Iowa, joined the Federation and Wilmington, Delaware, the next year. Hamilton, Ontario joined in 1939 and Detroit and Newark, N.J. the next year. St. Louis affiliated in 1941 before Pearl Harbor.

The *Linacre Quarterly* began as a slim, oversized pamphlet of 16 pages per issue with a plain white cover. The first four issues contained mostly news about the new guilds and their programs. The first issue explained the choice of Thomas Linacre (1460-1524) for the journal title. He was royal physician for the young Henry VIII of England and became a priest in his later life. The first scholarly articles to appear in the journal discussed the history of surgery and the use of the safe period in family planning, since Drs. Ogino and Knaus had recently published their research.

To the credit of thoughtful and articulate Catholic physicians-authors, the first 10 volumes of *Linacre Quarterly* contained an increasing number of well-documented articles on controversial issues. News of individual guilds diminished, and the length of each issue increased to 24 pages. Contraceptive birth control and eugenic sterilization appeared often. The September, 1934 issue even contained a pathetic letter from a prison inmate in Oklahoma, sentenced to a vasectomy because of his criminal record.

But many other controversies surfaced as well. Authors responded to pro-abortion propaganda by Dr. A. J. Rongy. They discussed socialized medicine, sex education, ethical uses of lie detectors, behaviorism, the use of anesthesia in childbirth, ectopic pregnancies, and euthanasia.

Both the activities of the physicians in the guilds and the articles in the journal manifested one outstanding characteristic — profound loyalty to the Catholic Church. A defensive posture appeared in many journal articles, because the authors wrote as apologists for Catholic moral doctrine. They also discussed in idealistic terms the unique religious role of a Catholic physician and a Catholic hospital. They wrote about the compatibility of true faith and good science. The March, 1935, issue contained quotes from this subject from Dr. William J. Mayo of the Mayo Clinic. Authors also considered how Catholic physicians could get medical supplies to the missions, recruit more Catholic students for medical schools, and provide better health service to Catholic parochial schools.

A whole series of articles by James J. Walsh, M.D., Ph.D. gave biographical portraits of outstanding Catholic physicians, such as Dr. Joseph O'Dwyer, the inventor of intubation. In July of 1942, Michael F. McPhelin, S.J., pointed out that Renè Goupil, the North American martyr canonized in 1930, was actually St. Renè Goupil, S.J., M.D.

During the first decade of the Federation, psychiatry was expanding its role and competence. Journal articles dealt with psychoneuroses, psychosomatic disorders, and the psychological aspects of scruples. Other articles related medicine and the law.

An early book review, in the *Linacre Quarterly* of March, 1934, discussed the historic treatise, *Ethics of Ectopic Operations*, by T. Lincoln Bouscaren, S.J. Eight years later, as his position on the moral

justification of removing the unruptured Fallopian tube gained ground, two articles appeared by authors from the Institutum Divi Thomae in Cincinnati. Elmer A. Schlueter, M.D. and Msgr. James W. O'Brien, S.T.D. presented medical and moral aspects of the question. Later in 1942, Rev. Henry J. Davis, S.J., a well-known English moralist, published further ethical comments.

The first editor of *Linacre Quarterly*, Anthony Bassler, M.D., served four years, nourishing the journal as a "depression baby" with headquarters in New York City. When he resigned in 1936, he noted that two criticisms of the journal had surfaced, namely, the ethical doctrine was too severe, and too much attention was given to the birth control/sterilization issue. He responded to the latter criticism by pointing out that only 10 of 72 printed pages in the four 1935 issues treated that topic. He erred in his mathematics by indicating that this was only 7.2% of the content; he meant 13.9%!

Dr. James F. McDonald became editor of *Linacre* in January, 1937, but only served until the July issue when Joseph A. Dillon, M.D. replaced him. The July, 1939, issue, two years later, contained his obituary. His wife, Alexandra Dillon, devotedly continued his work as editor, with James J. Walsh, M.D., Ph.D., serving as editor-in-chief until he died in 1942. In October, 1940, the journal began to appear for the first time with a heavy paper blue cover instead of the plain white paper cover. Mrs. Dillon wrote of her regrets that wartime difficulties delayed the October, 1942 issue, but *Linacre* continued to appear regularly throughout the war. Mrs. Dillon was replaced as editor-in-chief by Rev. Alphonse M. Schwitalla, S.J. in 1945, when *Linacre* moved to St. Louis.

Mention of the Second World War points out the first major milestone in the history of the Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds. The Guilds were born and went through adolescence in the pre-war years. After the war, they flourished in the decade of the 1950s. Then came the 1960s with another milestone, the Second Vatican Council, in the years 1962-1965. Developments since then deserve their own chronicle. But recent history doesn't offer much opportunity for nostalgia and remembering "the good old days."
