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Message from the Spiritual Advisor

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Message from the Spiritual Advisor

One of the interesting facets of our national meetings is the interest of Catholic physicians in the Liturgy. It is somewhat amazing to hear members relate that they have never participated in a Mass that was concelebrated, or when the Prayer of the Faithful was used, a layman read the Epistle, or an Offertory Procession was permitted. Some thought will be given to making the Liturgy of our National Meetings as rich a spiritual experience as possible. The thoughts of the Physicians and Guild Spiritual Advisors on this subject will be gratefully received.

Our National Meetings should and can create an atmosphere for an enriched Christian Apostolate for men of medicine. Already drawn together by ties of Faith and Profession you can share ideas, plans, problems, solutions and hopes and then speak to the Church Community as a whole. But you must fashion your Community first. A good start has been made, but before you can speak effectively to others, you must learn to do it better with each other first.

All areas of life, human activity, and organizational involvement are under close and critical re-evaluation today. But life is not confined to clinical analysis—it is a vital force which moves men to action. The component guilds of the Federation, and therefore the directive force of the Federation itself, might well accept for the time being the fact that it exists and proceeds from that premise to the task of influencing the affairs of men, both in and out of the Church. The elected leaders of the Federation might, with your help, clarify, amplify, and redefine the goals and services of the organization. In view of those clearer and more realistic goals it is certain that this group of physicians has the potential for being a strong, competent, directive, and formative voice of the Church in matters vital to the survival of man. This is your area of competence, and a sound base from which to offer a judgment, even when not asked.

A physician, or a group of physicians, cannot always prevent legislation judged to be immoral or a threat to life. But there is nothing to prevent an accepted catholic physician from getting involved with those implementing such laws so as to help form a better moral outlook in them. Inability to dominate a situation must not blind any of us to the persuasive power of a good christian. Some call this infiltration—others call it meeting the challenge of pluralism.

The term Moderator seems to suggest much the role of one who arbitrates or presides as a Chairman. I feel the term is somewhat inappropriate for the role of a Priest in his relation to Physicians Guilds. I have suggested, therefore, that from here on the National Moderator be known as the Spiritual Advisor. The term may not be perfect, and you may have some better suggestion, but for the moment it more clearly defines the spiritual role of the Priest as co-worker with the Doctor.

My compliments to the new delegates present in such goodly numbers at the last meeting. Your contribution in thought and spirit added much to the value of the meeting. Old acquaintances always remain one of the great joys of our meetings. May God sustain you all as you labor for God and man.

Father Kenneth MacKinnon