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Letters to the Editor ...

Catholic Physicians' Guild

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Letters to the Editor . . .

DIALOGUE CONTINUES

To the Editor:

I wish to take this opportunity to thank Father McCormick both for his contribution to the May 1972 issue of *TLQ* and for having taken further time from his busy schedule to have answered my critique of his *America* article.

I think Father is correct in assuming that the reflections I expressed are shared by other physicians and perhaps at some later date, in a more tightly reasoned article, I shall be more adequate to the task of expressing the view of those of us who tend to be theologically traditional and philosophically neoscholastic in the area of medical morality.

Till then, again I express my sincere appreciation to Father McCormick for having acknowledged my statement. I for one will continue to follow avidly his invaluable moral notes in the *Theological Studies* and I strongly urge others to do the same.

Sincerely,
Vitale H. Paganelli, M.D.
66 Park St.
Glens Falls, N. Y. 12801

CONGRATULATIONS FROM TAIWAN

To the Editor:

My heartfelt congratulations to Dr. John J. Brennan for his courageous, positive and fully *Christian* address (Linacre Quarterly, Feb. 1972)! We have been hearing too many purely

negative talks with regard to the National Birth Regulation Methods. But the question is: What will you *DO* to help those people who need birth regulation?—many of whom don't want to use pills, or IUD . . . simply out of fear, if not for ethical reasons. This is especially true here in Taiwan and in some other developing countries. Let all remember the words of our Lord. "As long as you *did not do* it for one of these least ones, you did not do it for me." We need desperately good Samaritans like Drs. John & Lyn Billings, Dr. John J. Brennan and many devoted doctors of your Catholic Physicians' Guilds.

Simon Chin, S.J.
Associated Professor
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THE RIGHT TO HEALTH CARE

To the Editor:

Please stop playing semantic games with the words "rights" and "duties", etc. I may have an obligation in Christian charity to treat the sick who cannot pay me; but they certainly cannot have a right to my services. If they do, neither of us is free or capable of giving or receiving Christian charity. I agree entirely with Dr. Sade. You cannot have it both ways. I cannot give true Christian charity if the recipient has a "right" to that gift. Your semantic pabulum dehumanizes both of us.

Lyle C. Voge, M.D.
Orange, California

REICH'S ARTICLE SPREADING CONFUSION

To the Editor:

You gave so much space to Fr. Warren T. Reich's article, "Policy vs. Ethics," *Linacre Quarterly*, Feb. 1972, I'm hoping you will find room for this letter, or a similar one, to the editor.

First, I want to congratulate John J. Brennan, M.D., for his article "Thousands of Compromise". It is wonderful that the doctor seems quite able to accept the Hospital Directives even though a number of priests have difficulty with them!

Then, could I state a few objections to Fr. Reich's article? He seems worried that the Directives establish hospital policy rather than state ethical norms. If we are to call our hospitals Catholic, then why should it not be our policy to follow proper ethical norms in those hospitals? Is Fr. Reich ashamed of Catholic ethics in Catholic hospitals?

At the NACC meeting in Menlo Park, April 9-21, 1972, I believe the majority of the Catholic chaplains there agreed that if our Catholic hospitals are to exist at all, then they must be Catholic, follow our Catholic code of ethics.

Father states that in Canada the bishops recommend that "for certain complex situations specialists be called upon to assist in the decisions of conscience of doctor, patient, or administrator, and that these specialists—doctors, theologians, and others—should function in local and regional medico-moral committees. Bishops are not designated as

members of these committees nor as final arbiters of the meaning and application of the guidelines." Father seems to think this policy is in total disagreement with the tone of Directives as given by the American bishops. I see no disagreement.

Quite probably the Canadian theologian would be appointed by the local bishop, or bishops, and would be a truly Catholic theologian.

It seems to me that Father's article questions the authority of the bishops to give Catholic moral directives. This much I rather firmly believe: neither the scientists nor theologians like Fr. Reich are entrusted by Christ with the teaching role in the Church. This rests ultimately with the bishops. If Fr. Reich thinks that to follow the teaching of our bishops "encourages the moral immaturity born of dependence on the Chancery", let him so think. Some of us, at least, will follow our bishops appointed by Christ rather than a self appointed theologian, and no doubt we will be the more mature for it.

Finally, Father indicates that he sees some of the Directives as vague. Not nearly so vague as his article. Due to my ignorance, I may have misunderstood his article. But if I have misunderstood, this could be due to the fact that his article is extremely vague. At any rate, I'm thoroughly convinced his article contributes nothing but confusion to the already confused Catholic cause.

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Pierre, South Dakota