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From the Editors Desk

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From The Editor's Desk:

These thoughts are being written just prior to the annual meeting of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians and the American Medical Association in Chicago in June, 1970. This period is rather discouraging and demoralizing for the American doctor. With utter misgivings and dismay did we read in the *AMA News* (May 25, 1970) of the decision of the AMA Board of Trustees to submit to the House of Delegates a new policy on abortion, namely, to allow the decision to be made by the physician and the patient. We have no way of knowing how the House of Delegates will vote on this "abortion on demand" proposal but the very fact that the AMA Board of Trustees would propose such a radical departure from the traditional moral and ethical principles for which medicine has stood for so many centuries raises some serious questions as to the leadership capabilities of the American Medical Association. The American Medical Association has been under attack from various quarters for some period of time. It has been accused of being unresponsive to the health needs of the poor, the underprivileged, the down-trodden. It has been accused of being callous and obdurate in the face of great human needs. Does the American Medical Association and its Board of Trustees wish to add further fuel to the fire of its critics by officially forsaking the most innocent and defenseless member of society, the unborn child, by adopting the abortion on demand policy?

Regardless of the action of the House of Delegates on the AMA Board of Trustees' proposal, the individual physician must seriously re-evaluate his own convictions in regard to the AMA. How can one seriously support and belong to a group whose leadership takes a position which invites its member to flagrantly violate the Hippocratic Oath? It seems to us that the American doctor is being ill served by its Board of Trustees and that this same Board is sowing the seeds of destruction of the AMA by attempting to create conditions within the Association which facilitates the violation of traditional medical ethics. This abdication of principle which is quite evident in the Board of Trustees' proposal brings home to us with pristine clarity the vital necessity of a strong, independent National Federation of Catholic Physicians. Many of our non-Catholic medical colleagues are appalled at this cavalier proposal of the AMA Board and they are encouraged by our forthright, unequivocal stand on the sacredness and inviolability of the unborn child's right to life.

Let us continue in our efforts to remind the nation and the world of the sacredness of human life and of the doctor's duty to preserve life and not destroy it.

John P. Mullooly, M.D.