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Observations on The Buffalo Council of Catholic Men and The Catholic Physicians' Guild of Buffalo

JOSEPH A. E. SYRACUSE, M.D.

The first ten years of existence of the Buffalo Council of Catholic Men has been most interesting, productive, and surely a most promising catalyst in the crystalization of the integral facets of the Buffalo Catholic Diocese. The Buffalo Council of Catholic Men was chartered and became an affiliate of the National Council of Catholic Men in 1956. The latter, was a Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, which was instituted by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops soon after World War I. The National Council of Catholic Men is a federation of Catholic laymen's organizations. In the Diocese of Buffalo, the Council is composed of the following interparochial organizations: The Catholic Physicians' Guild, The Guild of St. Apollonia, Knights of Columbus, Knights of St. John, Order of the Alhambra, St. Columban Laymen's Retreat League, Serra Club, First Friday Club, Desmond Debating Society, Polish Union of America, Catholic War Veterans, Knights of Equity, Polish Roman Catholic Union, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Leo Knights, Canisius Alumni Sodality, Diocesan Labor College, and Diocesan Union of Holy Name Societies combining the parish Holy Name Societies which are recognized as the parish affiliates. The activities of all these organizations cannot be

enumerated in this short paper. However, of all these, the Buffalo Catholic Physicians' Guild which is a constituent member of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds, has had such a symbolic relationship with the Buffalo Council of Catholic Men that it merits more consideration later.

The Episcopal chairman and head of the Buffalo Catholic Council of Men was His Excellency, The Most Reverend Joseph A. Burke, D.D., Bishop of Buffalo. The Diocesan moderator was The Right Reverend Monsignor Francis A. Growney. The original officers of the Buffalo Council of Catholic Men were: Rupert W. Welch, president; Edward Hyzy, vice-president; Joseph Klocke, treasurer; and Humbert J. Campana, executive secretary.

The present Episcopal chairman and head of the Buffalo Catholic Council of Men is His Excellency, The Most Reverend James A. McNulty, D.D., Bishop of Buffalo. The Diocesan moderator is still the very ebullient Right Reverend Monsignor Francis A. Growney. The present officers are: William D. Flore, president; Alfred S. Scialfo, vice-president; Robert J. Sticht, corresponding secretary; Walter Muhar, treasurer; Albert G. Wozniak, marshal and Humbert J. Campana, still the omniscient executive secretary.

The dynamics of the National Council is to train and develop Catholic laymen as members of their respective organizations to seek and assume places of leadership in the community in general, and in their parishes, in particular; to keep abreast of current developments which involve them as citizens of their community and which concern the mores of the nation, the state, and the city or town in which they reside; in brief, to assume their proper place in the lay apostolate.

The Council in Buffalo has devoted much time and attention to the problem of objectionable literature. Fortunately, this problem has recently met with some degree of success, thanks to the activity of our special committee to improve legislation and favorable opinions handed down by the courts. The Salacious Literature Committee of the Buffalo Council, headed by Chairman, William C. Haig, reported on "the magnitude of the project in terms of billions of dollars per annum accruing to the publishers of bad literature, pictures and films. There is no end to the battle because printing presses run day and night to produce the product which yields large profits." The local battle has also been aided considerably by the very active work of the Buffalo Police Department under the leadership of the Salacious Literature Squad.

The question of altering the present abortion law in New York State to a more liberal one (Dominic-Bloomington Bill) was presented at the last quarterly meeting of the Buffalo Council. On the recommendation of the Physicians' Guild's delegate, a strong protest was sent to

the legislators in Albany: five state senators and sixteen assemblymen. The Catholic Physicians' Guild also sent a similar condemnation. Since the Buffalo Council has a quarter of a million families and eighty thousand votes, it is logical to conclude that these were influential, partially, in preventing the bill from coming out of committee. We must therefore keep on the alert, since it may be brought up again at a later date.

The Buffalo Council of Catholic Men bestows yearly awards. This year the "Man of the Year" St. Thomas More award was presented to the president of the Diocesan Union of the Holy Name Societies, Joseph G. Stark, for outstanding service to the Buffalo Council of Catholic Men and to the diocese. The St. Thomas More medals were presented to the outgoing President of the Buffalo Council, Epifanio Saia for his two years' service as president of the Buffalo Council of Catholic Men and to Albert Sialfo, as chairman of the speakers' bureau and "Ambassador at Large" for the Holy Name Society, Buffalo Council of Catholic Men, and the Lawyers' Guild.

The Inter-American convention held in Boston, Massachusetts, January 27-29, 1967, was attended by our delegate, the Honorable Judge Thomas Ryan. He presented a most interesting and comprehensive report of the activities of that session.

The National Council biennial convention was held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, April 5-8, 1967. The title of this convention was "Building Structures For Dialogue." Topics discussed were:

- Vatican II and new Church Structures
- Decision Making in the Church
- Comparison Between Catholic and Protestant Church Structures
- Building Communities of Christians
- Elections in the Church
- Pastoral Sensitivity Training
- The Church in the Future
- Issues to be discussed:
- Parish Councils
- Diocesan Pastoral Commissions
- Planning the Future of the Lay Apostolate
- Leadership for N.C.C.M.
- Adult Christian Education
- The moderator and officers participated.

The Catholic Physicians' Guild was organized at the specific request of His Excellency Bishop John O'Hara of Buffalo, New York. Its Constitution was written by the President of St. Boneventure College, the Very Reverend Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M., S.T.D. The Guild became a charter member of the Buffalo Council of Catholic Men in 1956.

As one of the interparochial organizations, the Catholic Physicians' Guild has been proud to work in many capacities as one of the Buffalo Council of Catholic Men affiliates. The Guild has been represented by its delegate at every quarterly council meeting and has attended every annual Diocesan Council convention. In 1947, we were represented at numerous functions of the Eucharistic Congress in Buffalo.

The Guild has, in addition, cooperated in working closely with several other organizations. These

groups have also celebrated their Patron Saint's Annual Mass; The White Mass in October, for St. Luke; The Red Mass in September for St. Thomas More; and for the dentists, St. Apollonia in February.

Furthermore, the Guild has participated with the St. Columban Retreat League having Dr. Edward Zimmermann as its chairman, and with St. Ignatius Retreat League with Dr. Jerome Glauber serving in the same capacity. The Physicians' Guild, The Apollonia Guild, and the Catholic Lawyers' Guild have also collaborated in providing assistance for periodic examination, consultations, and treatment of the religious. This has been done under the chairmanship of Dr. Daniel McCue for the physicians and Dr. Vincent Marino for dentists.

Moreover, the Catholic Physicians' Guild has cooperated with the Holy Name Society and the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women in packaging and shipping valuable medicines, medical and para-medical supplies to foreign missions. These include those established in Bolivia and Peru by His Excellency, Most Reverend Bishop James A. McNulty. In addition, the Guild has aided the missions at St. Suzanna near Sao Paulo, Brazil, and St. John's Medical School in Bangalore, India. The Guild has supplied the last two mentioned with monies which have helped to defray part of the salaries of local physicians; and also needed instruments, necessary textbooks, medical literature and periodicals. All this has been made possible through the untiring and unselfish efforts of the

Guild's chairman of foreign missions, Dr. John G. Zoll and his co-chairman, Dr. Charles Bauda who also is Director of Region II of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians.

This report has been submitted with the aid of data furnished by the Executive Secretary, Mr. Humbert

J. Campana, and from the newsletters of the Buffalo Council of Catholic Men, Volume 3, No. 1, January 1967 and No. 2, April 1967.

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The Chicago Guild wishes to thank representatives of Mead, Johnson & Co. and The Bristol Co. for sizable donations of drugs to a Mission project.

William V. Fitzsimmons,
Medical Mission Chairman