

2-1-1986

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Recommended Citation

Mullooly, John P. (1986) "1985 *Linacre Quarterly* Award Presentation to John D. Bergin," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 53 : No. 1 , Article 5.

Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol53/iss1/5>

1985 Linacre Quarterly Award

Presented to Dr. John D. Bergin

by John P. Mullooly, M.D.



The *Linacre Quarterly* award is being presented this year to Dr. John Daniel Bergin, a physician from Wellington, New Zealand.

A review of his writings demonstrates what a finely attuned mind he has, and illustrates how well he has integrated the theological, philosophical, medical and ethical disciplines so as to form a holistic Christian world view of society. His writings are suffused with a deep sense of the Christian life. His awareness and love for the Christian life finds its expression when his wide-ranging intellect focuses on ethical questions raised by modern medicine and scientific research. When modern medical practice, research or experimentation comes into conflict with the Christian dignity and values of human life, Dr. Bergin is at his best. Out of his deeply human Christian mind and heart, he writes with clarity, understanding and perceptiveness.

I would like to give you some of the background of our *Linacre Quarterly* award recipient. Dr. Jack Bergin is a neurologist and native of Wellington, New Zealand. He received his early education from the Brigidine Sisters in Foxton and the Marist Fathers in Silverstream, New Zealand. He attended medical school at the University of Otago, receiving his degree with distinction during the dark days of World War II in 1943. Those of you who are old enough to remember World War II will recall how frightened we all were during 1941 and 1942, when Dr. Bergin was a medical student. I was a schoolboy on Long Island, N.Y., seeing the concern for my father when the Japanese were overwhelming the Philippines and rapidly advancing on the Malay Peninsula. The loss of Prince of Wales and the

Repulse from Japanese torpedoes and dive bombers, the destruction of the American fleet in Pearl Harbor and the loss of Malay Peninsula and of Singapore left Australia and New Zealand naked and open to invasion. These events took place in barely three months time. What were Dr. Bergin's thoughts during those trying days as a medical student?

Like most medical students, he finished his studies despite the war and went into military service in 1945-46. During the next three years, he did post-graduate training in surgery, pathology and medicine in Wellington. From 1950-54, as many physicians in the British Commonwealth did, he traveled to England, gaining additional training. From 1952-53, he received neurology training at the National Hospital for Mental Diseases in London.

Dr. Bergin returned to New Zealand where he actively carries on a consultant practice in neurology and is senior neurologist and head of the neurology department at Wellington Hospital.

He is a member of both the New Zealand and Australian Association of Neurologists and holds several leadership posts in medical and neurology societies.

In his zeal and dedication to his Christian medical vocation, he was a founding member of the Guild of St. Luke and SS. Cosmas and Damian in 1954 and became its Master through 1979. He was national vice-president of the Society for the Protection of the Unborn, serving in this position from 1974-1982. In 1982, he became the Oceanian member of the Executive Committee of the International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations. He and his charming wife, Lorna, were appointed Member Couple of the Pontifical Council for the Family in 1982. I vividly remember meeting Jack and Lorna at our FIAMC executive meeting in Rome that year.

Dr. Bergin has been an active participant at many national and international conferences on neurology and ethics and was the organizer of six highly successful combined conferences of the Guilds of St. Luke and SS. Cosmas and Damian in New Zealand. These conferences, reports of which I have received, stand as a model for conferences for Catholic Physicians' Guilds throughout the world.

Not content with guild and medical society work, Dr. Bergin has been an active speaker, addressing hospital groups, church groups, post graduate courses, and specialty medical society and lay support groups. In the political arena, he has been the principal author of submissions on behalf of the Guilds of St. Luke and SS. Cosmas and Damian to the Royal Commission on Contraception, Sterilization and Abortion in New Zealand in 1975, and to the Law Reform Division of the Department of Justice in New Zealand on New Birth Technology in 1985.

It is with great pleasure that I present to you, Dr. Bergin, on behalf of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds of the United States and Canada, the *Linacre Quarterly* award for your article, "A Physician Looks at the Philosophy of Medicine", which appeared in the February, 1984 issue of *Linacre*. It is given not only in recognition of the article's scholarly content, but also in recognition of you as an exemplar of the ideal Catholic physician, truly a physician for all seasons.