August 1987

From the Editor's Desk: AIDS Epidemic

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Recommended Citation

Mullooly, John P. (1987) "From the Editor's Desk: AIDS Epidemic," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 54 : No. 3 , Article 4.
Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol54/iss3/4>

From the Editor's Desk

AIDS Epidemic

Never in our history has the world been racked by such a devastating disease as it is with the AIDS epidemic. The disease is unlike other diseases in that it is universally fatal. The media, both print and electronic, have flooded us with the most up-to-date knowledge of this disease. New facts seem to be discovered each week as more knowledge is gained. The debates, in regard to testing, confidentiality, discrimination and public policy are going on and seem to become more strident as pressure groups exert their influence. However, the overriding concern of the public is in regard to how to protect itself from this modern scourge and how it is to relate to the victims of this dread affliction. If society is to respond appropriately to the myriad medical, social and ethical aspects of this modern epidemic, it is going to have to back the recommendations of the public health and medical bodies which are in the process of being formulated. Those in positions of public policy formation will need to have the best scientific knowledge of AIDS and to apply this knowledge in the formulation of policy. Great prudence and wisdom should pervade these policy-making bodies. The rights of the individual will be pitted against the rights of society. Hopefully, those afflicted with this modern day illness will not be treated as pariahs or lepers of biblical times, but with the compassion and mercy which Christ showed in His life on earth.

As we learn more about this disease and how it is transmitted, it evokes in my memory an old adage: "God always forgives; man sometimes forgives; but nature never forgives."

While this may seem somewhat of a judgmental statement, it also pithily states what we all know: a monogamous relationship in a stable marriage is the best guarantee not to get AIDS. It excludes premarital, extramarital or homosexual sexual intercourse. In other words, do not violate the sixth commandment. By following the commandments, we follow the best rules for the prevention of disease and for living a healthy life.

— John P. Mullooly, M.D.
Editor

**Annual Meeting
National Federation of
Catholic Physicians' Guilds
Oct. 1-3, 1987
Sheraton St. Regis Hotel
New York, NY**

Co-sponsored by New York Medical College

Theme: **"Ethical Decisions in Daily Practice"**

(See program in *Linacre Quarterly*, May, 1987)

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