Task Force Issue

The Catholic Medical Association (CMA) has a policy of developing Task Forces to investigate certain topics in depth in order to formulate policies and to research the medical literature on issues of pressing importance. In the past, Task Forces have investigated practices at clinics designated for the psychiatric care of priests. The role of these so-called “gulags” in perpetuating and exacerbating the clerical abuse problem was exposed. The Task Force on Homosexuality produced the CMA document *Homosexuality and Hope*, which received widespread recognition and popularity. The results of these two Task Forces were made available to every bishop in the NCCB as well as many priests and pastors.

This issue of *The Linacre Quarterly* is the venue for the publication of one of our most important Task Forces on delivery of health care. This report is the product of long and intense consultation among an expert panel and its influence can be safely predicted.

The Task Force on Issues of Conscience is a response to a growing and insidious attempt to impose the anti-life philosophy on practicing physicians, residents and candidates for medical school and post-doctoral training. Nothing less than a systematic attempt to eliminate anti-abortion sentiment within the medical profession is at stake. The CMA has been working with Americans United for Life Legal Defense Fund, a pro-family, pro-life public interest firm, in developing strategies for protection of conscience by legislation and legal action. The recent success of the Hyde-Weldon Amendment in protecting the right of conscience of religious institutions is proof that concerted action can be successful.

The Ethical and Religious Directives have been of immense importance in defining the role of the practicing physician in Catholic Hospital settings. There has been some divergence between CMA and CHA regarding material cooperation as it applies to individuals and institutions.

Although the activities of CMA Task Forces can involve extended self-sacrifice, deliberation and travel, we remain convinced that these strategies are crucial to our having an impact within the Church as well as in building a Culture of Life within the society at large. The pages of our official journal are well-used to publicize the recommendations of these important medical groups.

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Editor

May, 2005