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IN PRAISE OF THE DEDICATED

(By J. FLANAGAN, S.J.)

THE NATIONAL Association of the Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds, the Rev. Msgr. Donald A. McGowan, had planned to speak to you on the occasion of this annual Memorial Mass. I can express his great regret that he cannot be present. I know that he is not here because of his doctor's orders. I consider it an honor to be able to address you in his absence.

We have gathered here this afternoon to offer the Holy Mass and to pray for the deceased members of our National Federation and for all departed Catholic physicians. On an occasion like this we have an opportunity to meditate on the qualities of a Catholic professional person. We may take the liberty of comparing the qualities of the Catholic physician with the qualities of men who are part of the business world.

The latter, very frankly and properly, are engaged in a type of activity which permits a person to be motivated by selfish interest. Within the limitations of charity and justice, the business man legit-

imately takes as his goal in life the making of money — the accumulation of wealth. He is not by his vocation in life bound by or dedicated to the unselfish service of others. Christian society recognizes this as a proper business approach.

The professional man, on the other hand, is, as it were, set aside from the cold materialistic calculations of the market place. He has chosen a vocation in life which by its nature and its tradition is dedicated to serving the needs of his fellowmen. The very motivation in his life is service — service to men, women, and children — and service of a very personal and intimate nature.

The professional man has special God-given talents; he has had extensive education and developed particular skills. All of these, however, he possesses and uses not for himself or his selfish desires, but for the benefit of suffering humanity. All of these gifts are held in trust for all mankind, and especially the sick.

This concept of the professional man is beautiful and places the professions themselves on a very high and Christian plane. This understanding of a profession gives dignity and sacredness to the life and the work of a truly Catholic physician.

Father Flanagan, editor of THE LINACRE QUARTERLY, offered the Memorial Mass and gave this address on June 10, 1959, at St. Nicholas Church in Atlantic City, N. J. This Mass for deceased physicians is always celebrated during the American Medical Association annual convention.

This afternoon as we meditate on the work of the deceased members of our Federation, we can well think of their years of service in terms of this dedicated and unselfish service to others. These services, together with their religious observance, constitute their glory. It is well for us on this occasion to give thought to our own lives in order that we may make sure that these same ideals motivate us. It is easy to be distracted by the attractive materialistic values which surround us daily.

As we pray for our deceased members in the Mass today, we should not forget to pray for ourselves, and we should remember Catholic physicians as a group — we should pray that they shall not lose that truly Christian professional spirit which means so much in the world today and we should ask God's grace for the sick who are dependent upon the professional spirit of the medical profession.

I would be derelict in my duty

today if I did not pay my respects to the wives of our Catholic physicians. It is true that as a group these men have accomplished an incalculable amount of good and continue to do so each day. Nevertheless, they could not have done so much, served so unselfishly, if they did not have the understanding, the sympathy and the support of their wives. The life of a physician is not easy, nor is the life of a physician's wife completely tranquil. Indeed, the sacrifices are frequently so great that they could not be borne if these women did not understand and share the professional idealism of their husbands. We honor them today, also.

In this Memorial Mass, therefore, we prayerfully remember deceased physicians and their wives and we pray that the traditional spirit of unselfish professional service will motivate and support all of our Catholic physicians and their wives today and throughout the year.



Federation Executive Board Meeting Scheduled

The Executive Board of the Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds will meet December 5-6, 1959. Time: 9:30 a. m. Place: Baker Hotel, Dallas, Texas . . . The officers of the Federation and one delegate from each active constituent Guild constituting the Board will conduct business . . . Election of Officers.

