August 1962

10th International Congress - Catholic Doctors

Catholic Physicians' Guilds

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Recommended Citation
10th International Congress—
Catholic Doctors

LONDON, JULY 9-13

Eight hundred Catholic physicians from all parts of the world assembled in London during the week of July 9 as delegates to the Tenth International Congress of Catholic Doctors. Thirty papers were read and discussed during the week's sessions held at Church House, Westminster. The Congress themes were grouped under these titles:

The Catholic Doctor and the Aging Population.
The "Hopeless Case."
The Catholic Doctor and Approaches to Mental Health.
The Catholic Doctor in the Newly Independent Countries.
The Catholic Doctor and the Problems of the Adolescent.

The Guild of St. Luke, SS. Cosmas and Damian, with headquarters in London, accepted the task of organizing the Congress and the publication and distribution of the proceedings. It did yeoman service in monitoring the papers chosen for presentation, did yeoman service in monitoring the time allotment for reading of the manuscripts. Careful selection of material provided a most forceful Congress.

Dr. J. W. Dignan, secretary general, following vigorous pre-Congress activity handling volumes of correspondence and details of arrangement, was on hand to see that platform propriety was strictly observed, so important for such a gathering.

The hospitality accorded all who attended will long be remembered.

After intensive morning sessions from 9:00 a.m. until 12:45 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on the last day, tours of the London area were conducted and many receptions provided maximum opportunity for delegates and their wives to meet others from all parts of the world.

A most enjoyable Dinner and Ball on July 12 climaxed the social program of the Congress.

The Pope John XXI International Prize for Medical Ethics was awarded to our own Dr. Eugene G. Laforet of Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts for his paper entitled "The 'Hopeless' Case." Dr. Walter T. Elinen, member of the Wichita, Kansas Catholic Physicians' Guild attending the Congress, read the manuscript. Dr. Laforet was regrettably absent because of other commitments.

The "Hopeless Case." Dr. Grete Geldreich, a member of the Scientific Committee determining the papers chosen for presentation, did yeoman service in monitoring the time allotment for reading of the manuscripts. Careful selection of material provided a most forceful Congress.

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Linacre Quarterly

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forceful words their approach to a human problem in the light of the Church's teaching to consider the "whole man" — soul and body — in all aspects of health care.

The five topics revealed many interests of the participating doctors in the particular field of medicine each was representing. Those physicians who had served in the work of the missions, not the least of them Sister-doctors, made heartfelt plea for assistance in this area. The short-term help of American doctors received commendation. Addressing the Congress in behalf of care of the aged, understanding, patience, and concern for human dignity were the qualities most emphasized by those speaking at this session. Mental health was considered from several aspects both as to community care and spiritual regard. Problems of the adolescent were discussed from the standpoint of the Welfare State and the influence of the home in forming youth for his place in the adult world. Pursuing the matter of the "hopeless" case, a number of brilliant papers developed the theme, "When death seems inevitable, how far should the doctor go to keep the patient alive?" The discussions turned on the balance to be struck between the doctor's duty to preserve life and the patient's right to die with dignity and in peace.

From time to time with permission of the Congress, we will include in the LINACRE QUARTERLY a number of the papers presented. A report of this nature cannot adequately present the activities of a week's intensive consideration of world-wide expression on matters so close to the whole of man's life. Those who participated are to be commended not only for the time and research expended on each paper but also for their distinguished presentations. One had the distinct impression that each doctor considered himself very privileged to be a part of these deliberations.


The intensive with the social was a happy combination of this week and no small measure of credit is due to the Ladies Congress Committee. Their ministrations, heartily acknowledged on the occasion of the Ball, added much to provide occasions for those from foreign climes to meet for boat excursions, luncheons, receptions and theatre parties. The London hospitality will be a subject of warm consideration for a long, long time.

LINACRE QUARTERLY

In 1964, a European Congress, or regional meeting, will be held in Malta. The 11th International Congress of Catholic Doctors is scheduled for 1966. At the spirited invitation of Dr. Mariano M. Allimurung, it is to be held in Manila, the Philippines.

Jean Read, Congress observer for National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds