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Word From The Moderator Miami Guild



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Perhaps never before have the People of God so relentlessly challenged the right of Catholic organizations to exist or so seriously insisted that their usefulness be accurately appraised. This is being demanded by the universal call to the *aggiornamento*.

Ours is the era when dead wood groups need to be pruned or put to the sacrificial fire, so members can be made aware of their newly clarified role as apostles in the Church and be turned to truly apostolic work. This is the post-council period when organizations must become vital or cease to exist, if they are to be truly Catholic and reflect the spirit and mood of the renewed Church.

Relating this to the Catholic Physicians' Guild, one senses immediately that an intensely challenging updating awaits our Guilds. This is so, among other reasons, because doctors who above all are looked upon as protectors of human life in private have now a unique opportunity to become defenders of human life in public.

Everyone by now ought to be aware that the great attack on morality in our day is centered on the sacredness of human life. Growing lack of respect for God's right as the Author and Arbiter of life runs the gamut from the plight of the unborn child, whose right to exist is denied him, to the sad condition of the lingering sufferer whose life would be snuffed out in the name of mercy.

It used to be thought of the Church that she kept her distance from the world and worked always intensely but defensively for the salvation of souls. Now with the Ecumenical Council, the doors of the Vatican have swung open, the Church has gone into the market place to begin and to keep alive a dialogue with modern man in all aspects of his earthly life.

We are reminded that in somewhat the same way the doctor in the past, as the protector of life, has acted in a private or somewhat hidden manner, partly because of the very nature of his work. But today, like the Church on the offensive, our medical men must bring their skill, their love for life, their mercy and their prestige into the market place in the public defense of human life. We cannot exaggerate the gravity of this threat to the very foundations of society.

In a sense the attack on life today is more subtle than the mysterious working of germs, because the current campaign against the unborn child, for instance, is the result of education and enlightenment, not of ignorance and superstition.

If it is true of all groups that in union there is strength, how superbly true is this of medical men when united, not as a self-seeking lobby for personal or professional gain, but as a dedicated group of men committed to the safeguarding of moral principles governing human life.

The influence of the doctor in his community in the past has rightly given him prestige and respect shared by few others. What valid reason for hope we now have that our doctors united in the objectives of an updated Physicians' Guild may bring to bear a supernatural influence on society in their public defense of the sacredness of life. Surely in this sense our Guilds are on the wave of the future and in step with the Church.