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better than the norm. Each Catholic hospital should make this comparison for itself!

To pose another question: how does the percentage of live babies to the number of confinements in a Catholic hospital compare with that of non-Catholic institutions? Again, this is a question Catholic hospitals should answer for themselves. We know this: there are many babies born in a Catholic hospital who might have been sacrificed by “therapeutic” abortion in other institutions.

Some non-Catholic obstetricians have held that sterilization of the mother after the second or third caesarean section is mandatory. Do not our statistics disprove this unscientific interference with motherhood? We know that not a few instances of five, six, and even seven caesarean sections are on record in our institutions.

In other words, the adherence to basic Christian principles of respecting the life of the unborn and the determination to save the life of the foetus if at all possible has been a wholesome pressure which has stimulated great improvement in the science of obstetrics, and resulted in bringing to the light of day hundreds of infants who in other circumstances might not have been born. And in accomplishing this we have not sacrificed the life of any mother.

Cannot our medical staffs be made more aware of these facts? Could not annual reports stress these facts? We have a duty to furnish this information to our friends and benefactors. We owe it to our medical staffs.

Let us resolve to cease our fumbling protests of a negative nature. Let us resolve to tell our story in positive, statistical language! The facts speak for themselves and they are all in our favor.

(Reprinted from Hospital Progress June, 1951)

Saints Cosmas and Damian

C. Francis Werts, M.D.

SAINTS COSMAS AND DAMIAN share with Saint Luke the position of patrons of the medical profession. It is with embarrassment that I admit ignorance of this fact until very recently, although I had pursued my medical career for a decade, after a long course in exclusively Catholic institutions of learning. Saints Cosmas and Damian were selected by the Catholic Church as examples for those of us who are aspiring to reach the goal they now possess, and aspiring to that end in the same external circumstances of life. If we do not strive for the attainment of that blessed goal they now hold, we must face the only alternative, namely, damnation.

It occurred to me that perhaps many others have failed to become cognizant of the dignified position of Saints Cosmas and Damian, and I therefore felt that I might make amends for my culpable ignorance by bringing the knowledge of these saints to others. It may indeed be unnecessary to bring Saints Cosmas and Damian to the readers of the LINACRE QUARTERLY, but if only a few come to appreciate them I shall feel well recompensed.

Saints Cosmas and Damian lived and died in the third century, in Arabia. They are mentioned in the Roman Martyrology along with their three brothers: “Anthimus, Leontius, and Euprepius, whose feast commemorating their martyrdom occurs September 27. The known facts of the latter three are indeed scant, but a number of items concerning Cosmas and Damian have reached us, and these are sufficient to enthrone them in our esteem and to afford us worthy exemplars in our professional life.

Cosmas and Damian were Christians from childhood who apparently enjoyed education beyond the average. We read in The Liturgical Year, by the Benedictine Gueranger, that they studied Hippocrates and Galen with enthusiasm, and correctly concluded that the perfection of the human body was but a faint reflection of the Divine Wisdom it so eloquently manifests. They accepted their art as a sacred ministry, and served their Maker in
His suffering members. So altruistically did they perform their 
ofice that they were known as the “Anargyres” (from the Greek 
alpha—privative, without, and argyros, silver). Lest this might 
occasion an odious comparison with men of our day, one might 
work with pure love in his heart in spite of the necessity of fees 
that arises from our economic structure today.

Their fame was enhanced by miraculous cures attributed to 
them, and it is clear that God’s mark of approval rested on them 
even in their life time. Such events scarcely escaped the attention 
of the governing powers, and Lysias, the prefect under Rome, 
ordered them before him. He sought to learn the secret of their 
powers and way of life, but they openly professed their religion and 
refused to adore the gods of the Romans, knowing well the penalty 
that millions of their co-religionists had paid in the name of Christ. 
The threat of torture was a futile gesture, for the Saints were 
equal to any ingenious machinations of torture their pagan captors 
could devise.

They were committed to dens of wild beasts; they were chained 
and hurled into the sea; they were bound to burning stakes; they 
were the targets of archers — all with impunity. Finally they 
yielded up their souls at the blow of the executioners’ sword, and 
won the palm of martyrdom.

Patron saints are selected by the Church for the good of the 
living. Those glorious confessors and martyrs need no further 
adoration but scarcely imitation for us in the profession. Perhaps 
that were so if martyrs were made at the time of their martyrdom. 
In the annals of the martyrs, there are examples of the effects of 
grace so overwhelming that unbelievers so clearly saw truth that 
they joyfully died for it minutes later. Persecutors have joined 
their intended victims. But in so many more cases, martyrdom 
was begun long before the day of consummation. The martyrdom 
of life-long observance of the commandments: the martyrdom of 
devotion to duty that was rarely easy; the martyrdom of patience 
in the presence of constant provocation; the martyrdom of virtue 
when vice demanded descent from the cross; all of these constitute 
a real martyr. How few martyrs there would be if their altars did 
not contain the ash of sacrifice of yesterday and yesteryear! And 
here the application to ourselves becomes clear. The life of a 
Christian can never digress from the Royal Road of the Cross. 
Whether the last moment is obvious to others as a consummation 
is but incidental. The essential is that our life must be a profession 
of the teachings of Christ, wherever that may lead. Saints Cosmas 
and Damian began that course early, and in this respect we may 
imitate them closely.

The second remarkable circumstance of the life of these men lay 
in the fact that miraculous powers were accorded them during their 
life-time. Certainly in that respect they are singled out to a degree 
that defies our imitation. Here again we behold a circumstance 
that is not essential either to sanctity or salvation. The power of 
miracles rests in God alone whatever the instrument that appears 
before man. The spittle and clay that Christ placed in the cy’s 
of the man born blind was as effective as any instrument ever 
employed in the external manifestation of God’s supernatural 
power. Hence the fact of miracles, while it carries the stamp of 
approval of God upon the person concerned, is not per se a sanct­ifying factor. Rather the virtue of the individual may predispose 
the providence of God in this direction at that particular time for 
a very particular purpose. Scripture tells us that the Apostles 
rejoiced that such power, namely that of miracles, was given them. 
We may assume that Judas was among them, and while it is not 
our office to decide his final fate, yet the fact of miracles did not 
confirm him in grace. Hence we may again emphasize the important
fact that Saints Cosmas and Damian lived virtuous lives in circumstances not unlike our own, and so achieved sanctity. Miracles followed, but did not precede or cause their virtue.

Finally, these saints were practicing physicians whose duties certainly had the identical relationship to their patients that prevails between doctor and patient today. Certainly their religious duties received exacting attention, but they were not canonized because they spent time in the observance of monastic discipline. The fact remains that the everyday duties of the professional man, dramatic and routine, have the tremendous possibilities of conferring sanctity upon those performing them with a right intention. Is the entire profession, then, to enjoy that distinction simply because their external duties bear that resemblance or identity to the life and duties of Cosmas and Damian? Unfortunately that is not the case. Only those will achieve this blissful end who fulfill two conditions, and these are not above the reach of any man of good will. First, all actions must be performed with the simple good intention of pleasing God, and the second follows as a corollary: the person concerned must be in the state of sanctifying grace. This latter condition seems so very obvious that it needs no discussion, for a person without grace could scarcely tend in the direction of salvation, much less sanctification. Pertinent to the first condition, any wrong intention would vitiate even the most sacred duties, and it is clear that the intention remains the factor which gives life to the objective actions of individuals.

The Church which transcends all ages has exercised wisdom in selecting these saints for our admiration and imitation. It remains for us therefore to select those essential factors in their lives that pertain to us, and to follow them. Nor need we be alone in this, for help from above is certainly forthcoming from those saints we honor, for we daily invoke them when we intelligently attend Mass and reverently repeat at each canon: "Communicaantes et memoriam venerantes . . . beatorum apostolorum ac martyrum tuorum . . . Cosmae et Damiani . . . quorum meritis precibus que concedas ut in omnibus protectionis tuae muniamur ausilio."

"Morality and Alcoholism"

Francis P. Furlong, S.J.

A recent publication should be of great value to priests and to doctors. I refer to Depth Psychology, Morality and Alcoholism by John C. Ford, S.J., A.M., LL.B., S.T.D. (Weston College Press, Weston 93, Mass.: 88 pages. Paper cover. $1.00 postpaid). In the first part of this monograph Father Ford, Professor of Moral Theology at Weston College and Professor of Ethics at Boston College, deals with the general question of unconscious motivation. In the second part he considers in particular the nature of alcoholism and the moral responsibility of the alcoholic.

My remarks will be concerned only with the second part of this work. I am sure that many will want to see the proof that: "Unconscious motivation as described in the Freudian and derived systems is a controversial theory, not yet established, nor agreed upon by psychologists generally ... But even if it is accepted that unconscious motivation exists and influences notably our conscious human activity, there is no proof that it eliminates or notably impairs the freedom of our everyday deliberate decisions." Still the particular problem of alcoholism likely is of greater immediate interest and concern to more medical men in their professional responsibilities.

This brief report cannot do justice to the scholarly work which Father Ford has already compressed into 35 pages. I shall make no effort to indicate sources as given in copious footnotes and a select bibliography. My purpose is but to inform doctors of this publication, and to give them some idea of part of its content, that they may decide to read the monograph itself.

Who Is the Alcoholic?

"But the alcoholic is the excessive drinker who gets into serious difficulty with his drinking and who generally cannot stop drinking even if he wants to, without outside help." The serious difficulty may be about holding his job, or keeping his family together, or keeping his health, or keeping out of the hands of the police, or