The Sixth International Congress of Catholic Doctors in Dublin was a religious and cultural experience never to be forgotten. There was something awe inspiring about being among dedicated physicians from all over the world, all motivated by the very principles of Christ Hiself, gathered in the very halls where the great Cardinal Newman carried on his quest for truth just one hundred years ago.

The whole-hearted support and interest on the part of the Holy Father and the hospitality of the Irish hierarchy was unprecedented. To be reassured of world cooperation and of the Church's militancy in the constant war against agnosticism and its related fields was a joy to utilize modern discoveries for human understanding and toward the betterment of humanity in all branches is the realization of a dream of centuries.

Indeed, even for the advances of modern science, it is unlikely that such international meetings could be held, from United States, Japan, Rome, Argentina, Spain, Mexico and Germany, everyone was able to hear the other in his own tongue like the Disciples of Christ after the Holy Ghost descended upon them through the interpreting head phones supplied the Congress.

Distance has been eliminated through airplanes and through the cooperation of the airlines the best possible service at the lowest possible rate is provided so that attendance at international conferences half a world away today is almost as convenient as reaching the nearest airport. The comfortable Pan American flight from New York to Shannon in less than eleven hours was a far cry from the freighters which carried the first Irish missionaries to the New World. The Rainbow tourist flight that night carried several Irish priests on their way home to visit their families, American businessmen on business missions, doctors who could spare only a week away from their practices, and a delegation from Boston, composed of whole families from the grandnother to the baby. High above the clouds, in the pressurized cabins eliminated any feeling of height; there is only space and very little perceptible movement as the big plane drones on. Flying the ocean gives a feeling of real peace as the passengers read, doze, or look down on the billowy clouds far below. The crew does everything in its power for the passengers' comfort and the food is good.

At the Congress itself, where 21 orders of Irish missionaries exhibited their work in the missions, all agreed that flying had solved the transportation problems of the past while one sister said she would never get over the feeling of bridging the gap of centuries when her Pan American plane landed her in South America and a few hours later she was on her way through the jungle in a primitive canoe.

It was easy to forget the chill rain in Ireland (which the Irish told us was unusual for June and July) in the warmth of the welcome of the people. The sun, which showed its face only occasionally, we found in the faces of our hosts. Everywhere one senses the presence of a real appreciation of human dignity with a pride in achievement and Christian charity permeating the very atmosphere. Every wish of the delegates had been anticipated.

Getting the delegates acquainted with the history of the Church in Ireland, to Ireland and to St. Patrick's particularly for the priests and religious who have carried Catholicism into every corner of the earth...

No report of the trip would be complete without a special tribute to the ladies who held forth in Newman House from the beginning to the end of the Congress. Interpreters, transportation and shopping services were supplied routinely with a series of tours to the interesting spots around Dublin, including famous Howth Castle and Glendalough, all rich in tradition and spiritual history.

After the Congress, before sending the visitors on their way, there was an all-day excursion to the beautiful lakes of Killarney, with a tour of the lakes by jaunting cart.

To begin the list of many who should be given credit for the fine program would be impossible but a special word should be given to the Cardinal, the Archbishop, our own Bishop O'Hara, and to Dr. J. B. Brennan, Master General of the Irish Guild of St. Luke, SS. Cosmas and Damianii; Rt. Rev. Msgr. J. Horgan, D.C., chaplain general; Dr. P.

It was a privilege for the writer and Dr. William P. Chester, past president of the Federation of Catholic Physicians’ Guilds, to be present at this Congress as representatives of the Federation.

A little verse by P. J. Bailey (1816-1902) appearing in the program expresses the Irish attitude:

We live in deeds, not years:
In thoughts, not breaths,
In feelings, not in figures on a dial,
We should count time by heart throbs.

In the opening scientific session on demography, it is apparent that in the present Catholic principles first and foremost.

His Grace, the Most Reverend John McQuaid, D.D., sounded the keynote of the opening session of the Congress when he declared: “You as genuine scientist acknowledge that you do not create, but rather, discover, truth.” He said that he would find it a vain conclusion if the Congress would not reinforce its convictions and so maintain its unflinching responsibility to God.

The Papal Nuncio, Most Reverend Gerald P. O’Hara, D.D., warned that “to assert truth is always to perform a duty.” He declared that the propagation of the race is “scientifically unsound” because the universe from Newton through Einstein to de Broglie and Heisenberg. There has been a decreasing longevity of the various scientific concepts. The very progress of science indicates a certain lack of stability in scientific concepts and outlook. The achievement of human welfare and human progress is the end or object of the study of demography but science cannot answer the question —what constitutes the true progress and welfare of mankind? To be intelligible, the answer to the problem must needs be found in the crowning part of metaphysics, that is, in that part of it which deals with the first principle and the highest cause, in God.

Professor R. A. Q. O’Meara, professor of bacteriology, Trinity College, Dublin, cited a “series of demographic problems of world wide implications” with the “advent of atomic synthesis as a means of increasing offensive power in warfare and of obtaining supplies of energy for industrial and domestic use.” He called for free discussion and the combined force of international intellect in the spiritual, biological, and physical fields but warned that solution might be impossible.

Dr. O’Meara said that man is not the producer of the world’s food but only the producer of the means of obtaining supplies of energy for industrial and domestic use. He called for full research and the continued force of international intellect in the spiritual, biological, and physical fields but warned that solution might be impossible.

Dr. O’Meara said that man is not showing himself competent to deal with the great cosmological force and to do so, he requires a faith and sense of spiritual values which he lacks, “a charity of which he has at best a confused notion and a renunciation of the evils of covetousness and cruelty deeply engrained in his nature.” He said the most important demographic feature of the use of atomic energy is the danger which it contributes to the survival of the human race.

He pointed out that medical science is...
not yet ready to deal with the effects of radioactivity and that there is no doubt that the threat to humanity from atomic fission is very real, yet "while the extermination of the human race is being threatened by the military, the survival of the human race is also being threatened by World Health Organization on the grounds that the world is overpopulated."

Dr. W. B. J. Pemberton, Master of the English Guild of St. Luke, SS. Cosmas and Damian, categorized the demographic problems facing the general practitioner as birth control, sterility and its treatment at subfertility clinics, termination of pregnancy and abortion, and geriatrics. He said that the modern tendency of young people to look toward the state to assume responsibilities belonging to the individual resulted in a drift from religion to materialism, so that for vast numbers Christian tradition plays no role in their lives.

Because of the tremendous advances in medical science, Dr. Pemberton said, People are coming to believe that all suffering can finally be abolished. Against the background, he explained, it is not surprising that a high percentage of the public look upon birth control, family planning and spaced pregnancies, as a normal procedure and ask assistance at anyone who dares suggest that such methods are contrary to moral law. He termed the acceptance of birth control and contraceptive clinics a result of "a revolt of the mothers against the drudgery of housework and the care of a large family, lack of housing and space for domestic help."

"There is a feeling abroad that the Catholic Church demands that a mother should have children to the limit of her fecundity," he declared, "and this, in turn, has led to the complaint that the Church is out of touch with the difficulties of ordinary people... They all know, however, that such ideas are wrong altogether, as after all, Christian chastity is a form of birth control—i.e., marriage and family life the keystone of the Christian control so true in theory and in the use, where there is sufficient ground, of the infertile period."

Dr. Pemberton said it was not surprising that contraceptive clinics are most popular and that "such an August boy as the Royal Commission on Population should recommend that they be allowed to work unhindered. The danger was that they might become an established part of the Health Centers which are assuming more and more of the practice of general medicine in England. Of the subfertility clinics, he said, "at least the Catholic doctor has no alternative but to refer his patients and although they are excellently run, certain methods cannot possibly be condemned."

Sister Dr. M. M. Nolan of the Missionaries of Mary said there is no need to speak of overpopulation of Africa until the swamps and river beds are drained, the tea-tree abolished and the cattle made productive. She said that Christian charity demands that these programs be continued. Describing the conditions of Africa and India, she explained that primitive women in both countries dread and fear the loss of their childbearing function. However, she said that birth control is flourishing in some parts of India, although it is not desired by native women in Africa. She appealed to the Catholic doctors to prevent birth control from being spread.

Dr. Halliday Sutherland, well-known British medical writer attacked the Malthusian theory on population and termed the true law of population, the Double-day Law discovered in 1841. Double-day's law indicates that the birth rate decreases in periods of luxury and rises in periods of hardship. Citing England as an example, Dr. Sutherland declared that during the periods of hardship and famine during the second decade of the last century the population rose by seventeen percent and today when the country is during its "most luxurious social scheme" the birth rate is falling. Referring to the fact that the average number of children per family in Britain had fallen from six to one. Dr. Sutherland declared, "England would have been Catholic long ago were it not for the many mixed marriages. The leakage from the Church is very severe. You will find a very great difference between birth rate in mixed marriages and Catholic marriages both in England and America."

He said that as long ago as the ancient Greeks, religion was shown to have an influence on population trends.

Dr. Sutherland said the Malthusian theory generally appeals to the left wing and continued: "That remarkable body, UNESCO, which seems to be completely in the hands of Left opinion a year ago was asserting that there is not enough food in the world. Six months ago, they changed their tune and said there was plenty of food for everybody. Three months ago, they found America reducing her production of wheat in order to keep up the price."

The Old Wives' Tales on the Catholic attitude and practices in obstetrics and gynecology were soundly criticized at the sectional session on Obstetric and Gynecological Problems in Demography. A Mexican delegate, Dr. Jose Martinez, declared that therapeutic abortion is rapidly disappearing from medical practice and that sound obstetrical practices agree with rigid rules of morality. He declared that the "life of both mother and child are inviolate" and that the idea of a choice between them is a "sad reminder of the beginning of obstetrics." He called for an increase in prenatal education for prospective mothers pointing out that the arguments for therapeutic abortion were being broken down because of increased scientific knowledge of obstetrics and gynecology and by an increasing acceptance on the part of the mother to hospitalization in sickness. He cited statistics to show that by conservative means, there are today fewer maternal and infant deaths in normal childbirth than there are from therapeutic abortion.

Dr. M. I. Drury cited figures to indicate that the therapeutic abortion of the pregnant cardiac was an unscientific approach to such problems. He called for better diagnosis and treatment in heart disease to eliminate any arguments in favor of abortion. Among 410 selected patients, only seven-tenths of one percent died. He urged doctors to improve their scientific knowledge in order to efficiently grade the patients on physical capacity and to select the best possible treatment for the individual patient with emphasis on rest, medication, treatment of the anemia and infections. He said there is no evidence that, repeated pregnancies shorten lives.

One of the gravest dangers of abortion, under any circumstances, according to Dr. Drury, is the psychological damage inflicted upon the mother. He said the psychiatric wards are filled with patients suffering from psychic hangovers from abortion, while the term "exhaustingly depleted hysteritized patient" appears frequently in the psychiatrist's notes. Dr. Drury warned that social workers and even psychiatrists are often taken in by the arguments of crafty women.

Dr. Lyle Cameron of Great Britain suggested that the lives of more women would be saved if unethical practices were never carried out, while Dr. A. P. Barry of Ireland reinforced the arguments for conservative obstetrics with more and better scientific knowledge so that a demand for better prenatal and postnatal care and education of the mother...
The necessity for keeping elderly people on their feet as long as possible and of keeping them healthy and happy occupied the session on geriatrics. Gaging the increase in the number of elderly people in the world, the doctors called upon Catholic doctors everywhere to learn more about the nature and treatment of the diseases of the aging as well as providing facilities for them. Dr. Weebers of Holland suggested it would appear desirable to substitute an adequate salary with less arduous work under medical supervision for an outright pension, pointing out that the greatest problem facing the retired worker is how to pass his day. Dr. J. Ledeire of Belgium predicted an increase in the number of aged persons in Holland and Belgium and said that industry as well as medicine should gear itself to meet the changing population.

Speaking on ethical problems in geriatrics, Dr. J. Fleetwood of Ireland said that all doctors must ask themselves how their specialists are “compensated, Dr. J. Ledeire of Belgium predicted an increase in the number of aged persons in Holland and Belgium and said that industry as well as medicine should gear itself to meet the changing population.

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Obviously, according to Dr. Camilleri, the only solution lies in both limitation and expiation, but the former is not acceptable because "legal principles regarding marriage bind all communities. Catholic is not, but continuously, so to encourage the community to limit the family by any means."

With emigration as the only answer, he explained that the emigration is now "too slack to catch up with the increase in population," that the target figure of emigrants away from Malta is 12,000 a year, but that actually, there has been only a total of 3,000 from 1945 to 1951, of whom some 3,000 were returned. An attempt has been made by the British government to bring in an additional of 200,000 a year for five years to improve a Vocational Training Program for prospecting emigrants to Australia under the Passage Agreement between the two countries.

In Japan, according to Dr. P. Y. Moriqu, the problem is complicated by the fact that the has buy his citizens and that Many continue will not accept Japanese immigrants.

Dr. Patrick Moran of Ireland, speaking on "The Irish Family," declared that in spite of the pessimistic social prognosis by so many sociological prophets, the future of Ireland is not hopeless and they are not likely to "perform the vanishing trick" which has been forecast.

He called the family, "the keystone of the social arch..." God's chosen means for the perpetuation and education of the human race" and warned that the State should assist the family only when it is necessary and when all other sources of assistance are available.

"Some of our most compliant politicians tell us that we are not the last out of Christian civilization to Europe," he said, "but it would be phonetical to predict that 20th century corruption has passed us by... Family heads are we ble privy with a consequent loss of our personal moral standards. As sociologists are very family churches and we are much pressured by many of these depressing aspects of our personal social fabric."

On the optimistic side of the "Vaxen" Irish picture, Dr. Morison points out that the birth rate of 2.4 per thousand is high and the death rate of 11 per thousand low but he admits "there are too few new families, establishment of too late," that emigration in fact increases the marriage rate in the lowest in the world the marriage age the highest, and 60% of the people never marry so that the percentage of Old People to total population is the largest in the world. In type all that, however, he pointed out that fertility is going up and 4.3 children per marriage in high.

He advocated a real problem in the number leaving Ireland because he says: "We must win, native, and dynamic elements of our youth have been left in large number, so that we are now breeding our home population from the more reactive, conservative and less enterprising types."

Dr. Patrick Carter of Charleston, South Carolina, ended up talking Catholic doctors to attempt in preventing young marriage, physically and economically. Speaking on the basic concepts of social and Catholic medical principles as a postponement for marriage, said it is the duty of the Catholic Physician to fully educate the spiritual, mental, and other components of marriage, their relative importance and the need for candidates to understand them. She said that a steril and temporary physical examination need the discovery and correction of any defects which might exist in no important contribution to the fitness of the couple.

"The need for Catholic thought in a guarantee of a living wage, proper facilities for the worker, the acknowledgement that whatever be his place in the organization of society, by that legislative or operational, as a Catholic he has a duty to exhibit a moral and educational social attitude," she stated, "which can be a powerful agent in a changing world order."

As doctors, she concluded, "We can and must point out the need for a reversibl amount of practical material possession before the couple decides on marriage. It is necessary that Catholic families have a certain degree of consumable interest in the good things of life which can be had by industry and perseverance effort. But importantly, it must be said that nothing can substitute the human heart. Only after a family is built on mutual love, unselfish devotion, determination to fulfill the Divine Destiny can the worldly goods give the warm glow that proves earth is a far better home."

Dr. William T. Carter, Detroit, Michigan, represents the Federation as Past President, made significant contribution in the discussions throughout the Congress.

At the closing banquet, Dr. Genda announced that a ban offered by the Portuguese Society of the Catholic International Congress of Doctors for the best paper on Social Service had been awarded to Dr. J. Mendez. Perez of Spain, representing the Institute of Social Studies.

The next meeting will be held in Holland.