Book Review of *A Doctor at Calvary: The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ as Described by a Surgeon*, by Pierre Barbet, translated by the Earl of Wicklow

Catholic Physicians' Guilds

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“Medical-Moral Problems in Neurosurgery,” by Thomas P. R. Hinchey M.D. (Boston College, Class of ’28) are typical of the problems discussed in this periodical. It is easy to recognize the value of this journal to Catholic physicians as well as to the student whose aspirations fall into the medical category.

The Linacre Quarterly appears in February, May, August, and November each year. The journal is attainable by yearly subscription or individual purchase.

Despite having given but a brief sketch of this organization and its policies, it is evident that the Federation of Catholic Physicians’ Guilds has made a great contribution to the medical profession and society. I have and will continue to undertake the study of medical-moral problems facing Catholic doctors and provide an ethical solution to them.

To insure continued success and increase in the activities of the organization, a definite growth in membership is necessary. Therefore it should be the duty and honor of every Catholic doctor to become an active participant in this worthy organization.

Fred Kessler
Joseph Hanss

The officers of The Federation and editor of Linacre Quarterly are grateful to Mr. Kessler and Mr. Hanss for the preparation of this article. The recognition of the Federation’s efforts to fulfill the aims set forth is most appreciated.

It is hoped that those Catholic physicians who are readers of this journal and are not members of their Catholic Physicians’ Guild, will write for information regarding these organizations. There is need to establish these groups in some areas as well as increase the membership in existing ones. Address the central office of the Federation at 1428 South Grand Blvd., St. Louis 4, Missouri.

A Doctor at Calvary

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ as Described by a Surgeon

Pierre Barbet, M.D.
Translated by the Earl of Wicklow

The author, a French surgeon, has gathered into one book the results of his anatomical experiments, his archaeological and scriptural researches, and reflections on the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ. His study of The Holy Shroud in the light of scientific investigation and medical aspects, presents a moving account of Our Lord’s crucifixion that makes this a source book for theologians and all who preach or write on the Passion of Our Lord; physicians will well understand the medical terms and their scientific significance, absorbingly presented: the layman who has deep feeling for Christ’s Agony will find opportunity to penetrate closer to the kind and degree of suffering and the medical cause of His death.

The preliminary sufferings—the Garden of Gethsemane, the Scourging, the carrying of the Cross—the wounds of the Hands, in the Feet, in the Heart, the causes of the rapid death, the descent from the Cross, the journey to the tomb and entombment are recounted in a manner different from the presentation of many artists who have not had the opportunity to view and study The Holy Shroud nor delved into the documents which give scientific reasons for these tragic happenings.

With the knowledge of the author the reader is inclined to argue with the artist whose imagination errs in placement of the Nails—the wound in the Heart—the Crown of Thorns—the inclining of the Sacred Head in death, even though Dr. Barbet does not. But as he concludes, “All these horrible pains that we have lived in Him, were foreseen by Him all through His life; He premeditated them and willed them, out of His love, so that He might redeem us from our sins. He directed the whole of His Passion without avoiding one torture, accepting the
physiological consequences, without being dominated by them. *He dies when and how and because He willed it.* Whether an artist's interpretation has deviated slightly from the facts the reader learns from this book, God hangs on a Cross, crucified for those He loves, and this spectacle cannot fail to move the heart of one who gazes on this majestic figure of sorrow, pain, and death.

"A Doctor at Calvary" is highly recommended for one, two, or perhaps three readings to fully appreciate the wealth of information that only study, research, and sympathetic understanding of the world's most unique event can impart. Illustrations of The Holy Shroud assist the reader in following the text, should the medical terms reach beyond the complete understanding of the uninitiated.

A Doctor at Calvary

published by

P. J. Kenedy & Sons,

12 Barclay St., New York 8, N. Y.

1954, pp 178, $3.00

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF CATHOLIC DOCTORS

DUBLIN—JUNE 30-JULY 4

The following information has been received from the Secretary-General of the International Congress of Catholic Doctors regarding the 6th Congress to be held in Dublin from June 30 to July 4, 1954.

It is to be under the auspices of the Irish Guild of St. Luke, SS. Cosmas and Damian. His Grace, Most Rev. J. C. McQuaid, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin, Primate of Ireland, is Patron of the Congress, which will commence with High Mass on June 30. The solemn opening will take place in University College, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin, at 3 p.m. on that same day.

The theme of the Congress is

DEMOGRAPHY AND MEDICAL PRACTICE

and will be discussed under various headings, such as:

1. General Demographical Problems
2. Obstetric and Paediatric Problems
3. Geriatric Problems
4. Psychological Problems
5. Social and Nutritional Problems

The final session will be held in Maynooth College, on Sunday, July 4, followed by Solemn Benediction to close the Congress.

THE GUILDS

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A Report from the Catholic Physicians' Guild of the Diocese of Buffalo indicates a growth of four times the original membership. Beginning with 30, several years ago, Father Michael F. Sekelsky, the Guild Chaplain, advises there are now 140 members. Important events during the past year were the Mass and Communion breakfast in honor of St. Luke. Father Sekelsky offered the Mass and Father Thomas Plassmann, O.F.M. Director of Christ the King Seminary, addressed 150 guests on "The Body, the Masterpiece of Creation," drawing a parallel from medieval medicine as taught in those days and modern medicine patterned after the science as taught by the physicians and scholars of the famous universities of the Middle Ages.

The Guild's annual banquet was attended by 200. Active part is being taken by the group in the Diocesan Catechumen Program. The annual retreat at St. Columban's, Derby, N. Y. is scheduled for the first weekend in Lent.

The Guild officers are: President, Edward Zimmermann, M.D.; Vice-President, Elmer McGroder, M.D.; Secretary, Carroll Keating, M.D.; Treasurer, Joseph Syracuse, M.D.; and Father Sekelsky, Chaplain.

The New Orleans Guild during the past year continued its project of physical examination of children in Catholic schools, adding schools of parishes outside the city. The library committee continued making Catholic literature available in medical libraries. A retreat committee functioned to stimulate participation of Catholic physicians in retreats. 172 Catholic doctors are members of the Guild in New Orleans.

An Issue of the Journal of the International College of Surgeons contained an article by a member of the Los Angeles Guild, Dr. Joseph A. Walsh. It is entitled "Traumatic Rupture of the Renal Vein with Intervention One Month After Accident." We congratulate Dr. Walsh and know that his efforts as reflected in this writing achieved the purpose as set forth.

Likewise, the contribution of Dr. Joseph B. Doyle, Boston Guild, appeared in the Irish Journal of Medical Science entitled "Uterine Denervation by Culdotomy," published early last year. Copy of the reprint has reached the Federation office. Congratulations are extended Dr. Doyle on this publication.

Dr. Daniel L. Sexton, member of the St. Louis Guild, and Third