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"COME ASIDE AND REST AWHILE"

By REVEREND DANIEL F. HART, S.J.

MOUNT MANRESA, STATEN ISLAND, N.Y.

In May of 1927 sixty physicians from Brooklyn and New York made a closed retreat at Mount Manresa, Staten Island. This was the beginning of the Catholic Physicians' Guild of Brooklyn, from which the Guilds of Bronx and Manhattan developed.

It is generally contended that physicians cannot get away from their practice and patients for two full days. Fifteen years of retreats for the Physicians' Guild of Brooklyn seem to be a sufficient answer to that assertion. There have been very few emergency calls for doctors while on retreat. Two years ago there were two calls late Saturday night. Both doctors went to Brooklyn, took care of their patients and were back on Staten Island for Mass at seven o'clock. This we think should show clearly how important these men consider their yearly retreat.

For those unacquainted with retreats we may say that a retreat is time spent alone with God. It is a time to think, to take stock of our spiritual liabilities that we may remove them; of our spiritual assets that we may increase them. It is a time to discover the ills of our souls that we may cure them. During a retreat we put aside the troubles and confusion of the world and consider our purpose in that world. It is refreshing spiritually and physically and prepares us to face the world again with renewed strength.

Pope Pius XI, by special benediction, given July 25, 1922, set the seal of his approval upon the work at Mount Manresa by declaring that the value of retreats, made according to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, has been proved by the "experience of the last three centuries... and by
the witness of all who during that
time put forth the fairest flowers
of religious training and of holi-
ess of life."

As recently as December 20,
1929, Pope Pius XI issued a spe-
cial encyclical in favor of retreats,
strongly recommending "those
spiritual exercises which are made
in private"—according to which
method the retreats at Mount
Manresa are conducted.

Pope Pius X regarded a retreat
as one of the most effective agen-
cies in the task that he had set
himself of "restoring all things in
Christ."

Under the inspiration of such
authoritative sanction an earnest
appeal is made to every Catholic
layman to avail himself of the op-
portunity of making a retreat.

These retreats are made by all
classes of men. In the vicinity of
New York, besides Mount Man-
resa, there is a retreat house at
Morristown, conducted by the Jes-
uits, one in Jamaica conducted by
the Passionists, and one in West
End where the Redemptorists are
in charge. In any of these houses
you will find retreats for all dif-
ferent classes of working men and
the different groups of profes-
sional men. It probably should
not be said that physicians need
retreats any more than any other
class of men, but it does seem true
that they could do more for oth-
ers with the help they themselves
receive during a retreat. Many
people who are timid about ap-
proaching a priest will not hesi-
tate to speak to their family phy-
sician about the ills of their soul
as well as those of their body. The
ever increasing moral problems to-
day are frequently solved by
Catholic physicians by a word of
advice and an explanation of
Catholic ethics.

A retreat offers rest and recrea-
tion for the body and helps in the
re-creation of the soul. A good
physician must be a good man. A
retreat will help him to that end.
"Come aside and rest awhile" with
Christ.

Questions and Answers

Recently an attending physi-
cian in a Catholic hospital was
asked by some of the Catholic in-
ternes if it were proper to give
contraceptive advice to a non-
Catholic woman. The answer of
course, is "No," because no one is
permitted to recommend a viola-
tion of the moral law, which tran-
scends all others. Again the ques-
tion was asked if the Catholic in-
terne in a non-Catholic hospital
may carry out the orders of his
Chief to perform a therapeutic
abortion or to prophylactically
sterilize a woman after Caesa-
rian section. The answer again is
"No," because no one has the au-
thority to command an immoral
act.

—Excerpt from The Linacre Qua-
erly, April, 1939.