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The Catholic Physician ... An Imitator of Christ

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An Imitator of Christ

The vocation of the Catholic physician parallels the life of Christ in many ways including His miracles of healing and His sufferings in restoring the sinner to new life.

St. John says that Our Lord Jesus on His journey from Judea to Galilee rested at Jacob’s well in Samaria and asked the woman with “five husbands” for a drink, assuring her that if she only knew what God gives, she would ask for and receive living water and eternal life. The physician — likewise fatigued and exhausted — is like an “oasis” in the desert refreshing the patient “dehydrated” in health, healing with loving care, offering hope and new life.

Perhaps the most exasperating period in the physician’s life is the ongoing temptation of discouragement and the desire to “give up” to “get away from it all.” The urge to retire and avoid the madness of governmental bookkeeping, the unnecessary harassment from society, and to escape the penalty of excessive taxation seems to be the most sensible solution to his daily problems. Like Christ, he is tempted by Satan to admit defeat and to surrender. However, Jesus told Satan “to be gone” for His mission was to do the will of His Father to redeem mankind, to give new life to those dead in sin. How encouraged the physician should be as he journeys through counselling and compassion, through medication and X-rays, through anesthesia and surgery — all with the hope of redeeming the sick man to new life.

Jesus in His passion and death seems to be rewarded with rebuke, ridicule and abandonment from the very ones to whom He gave life. How often the physician can identify his vocation with Our Lord as he dedicates his services of love with the best of his talents and finds himself faced with a disgruntled client or a malpractice lawsuit.

The doctor should be inspired as he sees Jesus as a teacher, a model of holiness manifesting patience, compassion, kindness and sensitivity to the needs of His brothers. For he too lives a vocation (on and off duty) inspiring his fellowman, giving witness of his faith to the patients, students, nurses, interns, parents and children alike as to what it truly means to be Christ-like, a Christian hero in these most troublesome times.

What the world needs NOW are persons who believe, who are committed, willing to give totally and lovingly. The Catholic physician is called upon to be that perfect model.

Rev. Msgr. Dino J. Lorenzetti

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