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It is the position of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guilds that the Catholic physician is never handicapped in his practice of Medicine by an adherence to the teachings of the Church. By adhering to magisterial positions on medical moral matters, the Catholic physician is actually liberated to observe the highest standards of his profession. The sacred and certain teachings of the Church provide unique ethical insights and the profound experience of an ancient tradition. The wise physician is thus insulated against the whims of a self-preoccupied technology or the lures of a misguided society.

The Federation has seen a need for a clinically-based ethical voice which can combine the rich Hippocratic insights with the added dimension of papal pronouncements. Since we are an organization of physicians we will rely primarily on our broad and medically sophisticated membership to develop our policies and position statements. In addition we will be reinforced by the many theologians, philosophers, ethicists, attorneys and other professionals who share our commitment to orthodoxy. Since many of these latter consultants will have served in a similar capacity as contributors, editors, reviewers and critics of this journal, we have decided to retain the name of Thomas Linacre Institute of Clinical Ethics.

“Sterilization in Catholic Hospitals”, which appears on p. 57 in this issue, is the initial demonstration of the kind of statements we hope to be able to develop on a broad range of bioethical issues. In addressing the issue of sterilization, we have deliberately chosen an issue which has been frequently and expertly discussed. It remains a highly controverted matter in many areas, however, and is unique in having been considered in numerous publications from the Holy See. The paper presented herewith was the subject of a meeting in Chicago at which numerous viewpoints were invited, expressed and debated. We hope that it will occasion further dialogue.