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The President's Page

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The usual response that each new President makes to his coming into office is the work of his predecessors is such that he cannot hope to match it, and feel this way. In going back over the Presidents' Pages for the last 10 years, we have seen a shift from the announcements of coming meetings to a call for most total involvement in the affairs that concern Christians. From a firm standpoint regarding contraception and abortion, it is my opinion that we are now focusing our total rejection of all forms of abortion, but at the same time, realizing that there are many others with different opinions and that we are actually a minority group. From the ethical standpoint, I feel we are on a much firmer ground promoting the protection of life rather than its destruction.

Our arrival to this position (protection of life), I feel is due in many instances to a failure to communicate between the Church and the People, the medical profession and the hierarchy and last but not least, the time factor which was present between the initial taking up by Paul VI and the Council and his final decision. When Humanae Vitae was published, many people condemned it without bothering to read it. It is, however, a document well worth studying and the N.F.C.P.G. Board of Directors suggested that local Guilds do this after their meeting two years ago. Some of our member Guilds did, but we have not coordinated any of the reports because of the overriding pressure of hosting the 12th International Congress of Catholic associations. I would now like to that we again take up this project and at our meeting next year come up with a resolution that is well considered and well grounded.

The 12th International Congress of Catholic Medical Associations was successful but the attendance of the American Catholic physician was less than it should have been. Without the registrations of the members of the Catholic hospital clergy and the Sisters, we would not have had a reasonable audience and their registrations helped us come a little closer to meeting the not inconsiderable expenses of the Congress. All of those who attended were struck by the caliber of the papers and fortunately, they will be reported in detail in our magazine and that of the Catholic Hospital Association later.

Perhaps the most exciting development in the field of medical morals over this past year has been the formation of the Human Life Foundation. Implemented by the United States' Bishops only a little over a year ago, it has begun to serve as a leavening agent in bringing together some of the diverse groups of Christians who are all working in the same direction but often separately and frequently at cross purposes with one another. Hopefully, much can be done in this direction by establishing a common communicating organization, which can funnel information to all of us. The Human Life Foundation has an excellent Board of Directors and some fundings for research programs and I feel that the National Federation should try to work closely with them.

Communication between the Catholic physician and his Church remains the same as it has been, extremely poor. The N.F.C.P.G. has two representatives to the Bishops' Committees throughout this past year, but no meetings have been held. It is my feeling that repeated overtures will have to be made in trying to keep alive the spirit of Vatican II and I feel that there are many areas of mutual concern, not only in fiscal affairs and black priests which has had recent publicity, but also in the medical field, itself, where our competence exists and can be made available. It is felt that our membership must remain available to each and every call from the Church at all levels, from the parish on up, and that our committees should form position papers which can be distributed widely. With this effort, I feel that we will be truly exemplifying the medical man in the modern world where communication is the name of the game.

James H. Masterson, M.D.
President

NEW NFCPG OFFICERS FOR 1971:

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