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The Monsignor Raymond F. Herzing Chair of Pastoral Medicine

REV. MR. THOMAS J. DONOHUE

In the Diocese of Buffalo medical leaders and theologians have combined efforts to advance the study of pastoral medicine through an annual series of lectures which is now in its third year at the Buffalo Major Seminary. Officially known as the Monsignor Raymond F. Herzing Chair of Pastoral Medicine, the series presents three full programs during the regular school year at St. John Vianney Seminary in suburban East Aurora, New York.

These Pastoral Medicine Institutes originated with Dr. Edward M. Tracy, a long-time associate of the Catholic Physicians’ Guild. In 1964, it was Dr. Tracy’s thought that by establishing a Chair of Pastoral Medicine at the new major seminary, an ideal situation could be created for teaching future priests of the diocese, at the same time sharing this educational opportunity with a wide audience of medical, social and religious leaders.

The idea received the full backing of Bishop James A. McNulty who agreed to sponsor the Chair in cooperation with the Seminary, the Catholic Physicians’ Guild and the Diocesan Family Life Department. The Chair was named in honor of the late Monsignor Raymond F. Herzing whose priestly career had been outstanding for his pioneering efforts to promote close priest-doctor cooperation in providing Christian solutions to the complex problems of family life in contemporary society. Appropriately, the Chair was inaugurated in October 1964 with an Institute on “Christian Marriage.”

Administration of the Chair continues to function under the honorary chairmanship of the Bishop of Buffalo. The active chairmen are Dr. and Mrs. Edward M. Tracy. In addition, there are 16 committee members: 5 married couples and 6 priests. The Catholic Physicians’ Guild is represented by Dr. and Mrs. Joseph J. Ricotta, Dr. and Mrs. John G. Zoll and Reverend Michael F. Sekelsky. The Family Life Department is served through Reverend Dino J. Lorenzetti. The Seminary coordinators are the Rector, Very Rev. John Lambert Rowan, OFM; the Professor of Moral Theology, Rev. Thomas G. Dailey, and the Professor of Sacramental Theology, Rev. Samuel J. Fatola. Other representatives of the Diocese are Rev. William G. Stanton; Mr. and Mrs. James T. Clauss; the Diocesan Attorney, Mr. Kevin Kennedy and Mrs. Kennedy, and the Honorable William B. Lawless and Mrs. Lawless.

Funding the Chair is accomplished through the normal income derived from admission fees for the lectures and through benefactors who form a body of sustaining members of the Chair. The Sustaining Membership
The auditorium has a capacity of 400. The dining facilities accommodate 250. There is ample Chapel space and there are several seminar lecture halls for discussion groups or for closed-circuit television coverage of auditorium proceedings for overflow audiences.

Typically a full institute occupies six hours. The first lecture and question period commences at 10:00 PM. This late hour is chosen in consideration of the indispensable work of the medical profession. Buffet supper is followed by a period.

The institute on "Christian Marriage" explored the roles of the priest and the physician in promoting responsible parenthood. Dr. Claude A. Lancot, a research fellow at Yale University, spoke on the role of the physician. Fr. James A. O'Donohoe, Professor of Moral Theology at St. John's Seminary in Boston and a member of the Consulting Board in Fertility Research at St. Margaret's Hospital in Boston, outlined the vital theological considerations which priests should note if they are to be properly informed, balanced and sympathetic to the complexities of responsible parenthood.

Dr. Francis J. Braceland and a panel of three Buffalo psychiatrists conducted the second institute on "Modern Psychiatry." The assisting panelists were Dr. Harry E. Favey, Dr. James A. Robinson, and Dr. Symon H.C. de Zeeuw, the chief psychiatrist at Meyer Memorial Hospital in Buffalo. The accent of Dr. Braceland was on the Catholic viewpoint toward psychiatry and on the delicate priest-doctor relationship that psychiatric counselling involves. Dr. Braceland is a past-president of the American Psychiatric Association.

A distinguished specialist in cancer treatment, Dr. Joseph E. McManus, and a panel of hospital chaplains addressed the institute on the "Problems of the Dying." After hearing from Dr. McManus the hard considerations which the physician must face, Fr. Stephen C. Doyle, OFM, then presented the major priestly considerations in aiding the dying. "Terminal Illness often strips the patient of all sense of hope. The institute pondered how informed priests and physicians can motivate such patients to seek peace of mind and heart in Christ and find meaning in their terminal condition. The experiences of qualified chaplains, Rev. Emil C. Bogumil of the Buffalo Veterans Administration Hospital and Rev. Edward L. Ulaszewski of Roswell Park Hospital, were shared during the panel discussion.

The institute on the "Problem of Homosexuality" saw the patient as a person psychologically disturbed and spiritually bankrupt. How to enable such a patient to lead a meaningful life was the subject of two speakers. Dr. E. Mark Stern, M.D., of the faculty of Iona College asked the question "Homosexuality—Sickness or Sin?" Dr. George H. Moreau, OMI, a consultant for guidance services with the National Catholic Educational Association, raised the issue "How Effectively do Priests and Physicians Counsel?"
The "Psychology of Woman" institute was addressed by Miss Margaret A. Dwyer, Dean of Women at Lemoyne College, and by Fr. Joseph Kerns, Professor of Theology at Wheeling College. Miss Dwyer highlighted the psychology of the college woman and of the unmarried career woman and pin-pointed their special religious needs within a 'married' society. Fr. Kerns amplified the religious expectations of college women in their approach to marriage and spoke of the particular kinds of spiritual life and career women for a balanced apostolic activity needed by college.

"Fidelity and Chastity" in the face of growing opposition to the present norms of sexuality was the subject of a double panel. The physicians view was presented by Dr. Max Levin, M.D., Clinical Professor of Neurology at New York Medical Hospital. A "Theology of Chastity" was offered by Fr. Warren Reich, M.S.S.S.T., the Professor of Moral Theology at Holy Trinity Mission Seminary, Winchester, Virginia. The full integration of sexuality into the life of the mature Christian was presented as a challenge to both doctor and priest.

The largest of the institutes was that conducted by Bishop John J. Wright of Pittsburgh on the subject "Authority and Obedience." Freedom and authority, inherently at opposite poles, establishes a tension widely noticed and experienced in the post-Conciliar period of the Church. Setting this tension against an historical, philosophical and ecclesiastical background, Bishop Wright established a Christian synthesis for leaders in the modern Christian community.

The latest institute dealt with the "Problem of Narcotics." Mr. Patrick F. O'Carroll, assistant to the commissioner for the U.S. Bureau of Narcotics, sketched the history of narcotics and the law. Fr. William B. O'Brien who serves as president of the Board of Directors of New York State's highly successful halfway house program for narcotics rehabilitation "Daytop Village Inc.," presented the entirely new approach his agency has developed controlling and curing the addict.

The institutes conducted thus far are achieving encouraging results. Seminarian response is excellent, particularly among those in the final years of theology. Attendance of women religious has surpassed expectations and is considered especially advantageous in view of the far-reaching effects of their apostolate in schools, hospitals and social projects among the underprivileged.

The Chair of Pastoral Medicine serves to implement in part both the Constitution on the Church and the Decree on the Ministry and life of Priests. The former proclaims the special love of the Church for those oppressed by infirmity, sickness and other hardships and encourages dialogue between the laity and pastors in order to share their special training and skills to come to clear and suitable decisions in alleviating these distresses. The latter urges priests to be solicitous above all for the sick and for the dying and to strengthen them in the Lord. Both of these matters are being substantially aided through this cooperative educational venture in pastoral medicine between priests and physicians of the Church in Buffalo. Continued progress can be expected.

REV. MR. THOMAS J. DONOHUE, Class of Third Theology, St. John Villa Seminary, East Aurora, New York, is a candidate for the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. He will be ordained in May 1968. Prior to entering the seminary he served as a U.S. Naval Officer for fourteen years. He currently holds the rank of Commander, U.S. Naval Reserve. Rev. Mr. Donohue is a graduate of the Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md. and received his Master's Degree in Business Administration from Harvard University.

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August, 1967