November 1967

Letter to the Editor...

Catholic Physicians' Guild
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Brief communications are welcome and will be printed as space permits, subject to the usual editing.

TO THE EDITOR:

Your August issue had excellent articles on abortion. Dr. Zimmermann's reflection on the Hippocratic Oath was timely. I am sending you a copy of my letter to the San Diego County Medical Society. I feel that physicians should ACT—not just TALK against abortion.

George W. Merkle, M.D.
Carlsbad, Calif.

Editor's note: Dr. Markle's letter addressed to the Council of the San Diego County Medical Society, with copies to Governor Ronald Reagan, Senator Jack Schrade and Assemblymen John Stull and Richard E. Barnes:

Dear Doctors:

The recent action of the California Medical Association in requesting the California State Legislature to relax our state laws on abortion has made a mockery of the Hippocratic Oath. It is certainly paradoxical that physicians of this state are in a real sense coerced psychologically into joining our medical societies because of a fear of being considered by their colleagues in some way "unethical" if they don't belong—and yet here we have the state organization adopting a patently unethical and immoral and even medically unsound resolution and then presenting it shamelessly to our state legislature. I do not know what course you may take, but I can say for myself that I am not going to stand idly by while our leaders in the CMA lead us like Judas goats over the precipice. Nothing but evil can accrue to us physicians by the action of this body. We will all suffer before the bar of public opinion for revolting from the proud principles of our medical art. The contempt that will logically follow for human life and the obvious atheistic principles upon which this resolution is based will only cause our patients to hold us in disrepute. The recent attitude of this organization (CMA) in regard to federal and state programs of medical care (socialized medicine) has been one of cooperation and servile acceptance of downgraded medical care and I believe that this is a sign of a definite decadence in our profession. Robert Louis Stevenson once said that of all cases of men, physicians are least involved in the errors of their age. If he were alive today, one wonders if his stand would be the same. I think it would be. Most of our physicians do not believe in some of the bizarre actions of our present medical leaders. It seems that the wrong men have attained high office in our profession in California—just as some bad men have attained high political office in our state governments. I, for one, do not feel obliged to follow them.

My conscience, therefore, dictates that I resign immediately from the California Medical Association in protest to its stand on abortion. My resignation is based on moral, religious, medical and professional grounds.