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From the Editor's Desk: An Infamous Day

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Once the religious mumbo-jumbo surrounding the term "human" has been stripped away, we may continue to see normal members of our species as possessing greater capacities of rationality, self-consciousness, communication, and so on, than members of any other species; but we will not regard as sacrosanct the life of each and every member of our species, no matter how limited its capacity for intelligent or even conscious life may be. If we compare a severely defective human infant with a nonhuman animal, a dog or pig, for example, we will often find the nonhuman to be superior in capacities, both actual and potential, for rationality, self-consciousness, communication, and anything else that can plausibly be considered morally significant. Only the fact that the defective infant is a member of the species homo sapiens leads it to be treated differently from the dog or pig. Species membership alone, however, is not morally relevant.

It is evident that every effort is being made to separate not only the practice of medicine, but our entire way of life, from religion. We can safely say that we are being presented with a new religion wherein man is god.

Through the medium of Linacre Quarterly and our national conventions, we have pointed out that there is no contrariness between science and religion, but rather a "complementariness." We must continue to do this. Thus, the National Federation's role in placing religion in its proper place in the total care of the patient is paramount and pressing, as well as compelling. In the last presidential message (November, 1983), I noted that the Federation's role is a prophetic one. Now we see what we must pursue in this prophetic role.

The 1984 annual convention of the National Federation of Catholic Physicians will exert all its efforts to demonstrate the vital role that religion plays in the practice of medicine. Please set aside time to come to Philadelphia in October.

— Joseph M. Gambescia, M.D.

### From the Editor’s Desk

### An Infamous Day

The following is the homily given by Doctor Mullally at St. Jude Parish, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin on Jan. 22, 1984.

This day, January 22, we dedicate to the memory of the innocent humans who have been killed by abortion. It was on this day 11 years ago that the Supreme Court of the United States issued the decision which unleashed a holocaust on this nation, permitting abortion and depriving innocent life within the womb of existence. This day, as Franklin Delano Roosevelt said more than 40 years ago, will live in infamy for its callous disregard of our most defenseless creatures.

How are we, as Christians, to respond to this? The shocking, depressing statistics of abortion are well known to us. It is so disheartening to contemplate the horror of abortion that we do not like to discuss it. But discuss it we must. When Hitler unleashed his personal holocaust in World War II, the six million Jews who lost their lives must have wondered whether or not God cared for them to permit that to happen. The same is true of us today. How could an all-loving God let this holocaust go on in our very midst—a holocaust which accounts for more than one million lives lost per year in this United States?

We are dealing with problems of evil and sin, and it is only by confronting them that we find the answer. The world has been visited
by evil and sin since the beginning. Wars, natural disasters, illness, death and starvation—all these are forms of evil. Yet there is meaning in them for all of us if we but look to our Lord and Scripture for the answers. God will lift us up from this moral abyss into which our country has fallen and give us the courage to continue in this earthly struggle.

Today's readings are particularly applicable to this land in which abortion is epidemic. Isaiah says:

First he degraded the land of Zebulun and the land of Napthali, but in the end he has glorified the seaward road, the land west of Jordan, the district of the Gentiles. Anguish has taken wing, dispelled in darkness; for there is no gloom where but now there was distress. The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shown. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing...

The gospel for today reiterates this when it describes Jesus with drawing into Galilee after John had been arrested. He left Nazareth and went down to live in Capernaum by the sea near the territory of Zebulun and Napthali, to fulfill what had been said through Isaiah the prophet:

Land of Zebulun, land of Napthali along the sea beyond the Jordan, heathen Galilee: a people living in darkness has seen a great light. On those who inhabit a land overshadowed by death, light has arisen.

From that time on, Jesus began to proclaim His theme: "Before your lives! The kingdom of heaven is at hand." He taught in the synagogues, proclaimed the good news of the kingdom and cured the people of every disease and illness.

And so it is with our country today. Jesus is with us now in the church and this beloved land of ours. We pray that He will remove the disease of abortion from our midst. We pray that He will forgive those physicians who perform abortions. And we pray that the sickness of mind and heart which brought about this holocaust will be cured by His loving, healing touch, much as that touch cured the lame, the blind, the lepers of long ago. This abortion mentality is truly a sickness of mind and heart, and only our Lord can cure such an illness. And we wait for this change of heart in our nation and its people, we should not become impatient, for today's psalm reminds us, "Wait for the Lord with courage; be stouthearted, and wait for the Lord." 

Finally, let us remember how He taught us to pray, that the scourge of abortion shall be lifted from our land.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread: and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

—John P. Mullooly, M.J.

Commentary on Abortion Article

Rev. Thomas J. O'Donnell, S.J.

The following article is reprinted with permission from the Medical-Moral Newsletter, Vol. 20, No. 9, November, 1983.

"Abortion: A Question of Catholic Honesty" is the title of an article recently appearing in The Christian Century (Sept. 14-21, 1983, pp. 803-807) by one Daniel J. Maguire, formerly a Catholic priest in good-standing who is listed in the byline as professor of moral theology at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and presently the visiting John A. O'Brien professor of moral theology at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana.

It is not intrinsic merit of the article itself that calls for comment, but rather the fact that Maguire identifies himself as a Catholic theologian and is likewise thus identified by two prominent Catholic universities, which might mistakenly convey the impression to some readers that his analysis of the Catholic teaching on abortion is in some way to be trusted as acceptable in the context of Catholic doctrinal teaching and/or moral practice. The fact is that the article is an error-ridden diatribe against the teaching of the Catholic Church on the question of abortion.

ITEM: Maguire writes that: "It is a theological fact of life that there is no one normative Catholic position on abortion." FACT: The