

The Linacre Quarterly

Volume 34 | Number 4

Article 2

November 1967

The President's Page

Franklyn E. Verdon

Follow this and additional works at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq>

Recommended Citation

Verdon, Franklyn E. (1967) "The President's Page," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 34 : No. 4 , Article 2.

Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol34/iss4/2>

President's Page...

At its annual convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on June 21, the American Medical Association in a resolution relating to the ethical posture of the Association on the question of abortion states, in part, the following:

THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION is opposed to induced abortion except when:

- (1) There is documented medical evidence that continuance of the pregnancy may threaten the health or life of the mother, or
- (2) There is documented medical evidence that the infant may be born with incapacitating physical deformity or mental deficiency, or
- (3) There is documented medical evidence that continuance of a pregnancy, resulting from legally established statutory or forcible rape or incest may constitute a threat to the mental or physical health of the patient.

We unqualifiedly reject this change of view on the ethics of abortion inasmuch as it constitutes a serious departure from prior ethical principles and represents gross abdication of the responsibility of the physician to fetal life. In keeping with the age-old Hippocratic oath to which we swore fealty upon entering practice, we assert anew that the doctor's duty embraces the protection of the life of the infant as well as the life of the mother. No doctor should destroy a fetal life simply to avoid impairment of the mental or physical health of the mother.

We further refuse ethical approbation to any theory that justifies the destruction of numerous fetuses on the grounds that some of them, indeed often a small percentage, may be deformed or mentally deficient. We find such a posture to be basically barbaric and at war with the noble traditions of our profession which have historically sought to safeguard all life and to alleviate the vicissitudes of persons physically deformed or mentally deficient by developing means to allow such persons to contribute what they can to society, often a substantial amount. Rather than turning to abortion, the efforts of our profession must be spent in perfecting medical protections against the hazards and diseases causing fetal malformations and congenital mental deficiency.

We further assert that it is a physician's duty to preserve fetal life regardless of the fact of whether that fetal life is the result of consensual, licit intercourse or the result of non-consensual, illicit intercourse. In the latter case, removing the fetus will not alter the facts surrounding the conception and will result in imposing the sanction of destruction, often on a perfectly healthy fetus, on the most innocent of the three individuals involved. We believe that other more genuinely sympathetic methods exist for handling a victim of rape or incest, but in any event hold that such handling must stop short of destroying innocent life.

Constrained by a deep regard for human life, whether it be a matured person or a fetus, and sensitive to the ideals which have long distinguished our profession, we pledge to continue to uphold the time honored medico-ethical view which accords full protection to fetal life and counsels the physician to do all in his power to preserve it.

* * * * *

We hope to meet Guild members at our annual meeting to be held at the Disneyland Hotel, December 1-2. The very excellent program planned is found elsewhere in this issue. Election of officers will take place at the General Assembly at 2:00 p.m. on December 1.

FRANKLYN E. VERDOL

Want To Help The Missions?

Many of our subscribers send their used copies of LINACRE QUARTERLY and other medical journals to missionaries abroad. If you wish to help in this work of spreading the Faith, write for the name of a missionary to: Kenrick Remailing Service, Kenrick Seminary, 7800 Kenrick Rd., St. Louis, Missouri 63119. A name and complete information will be forwarded to you.