

August 1979

Letters ...

Catholic Physicians' Guild

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Recommended Citation

Catholic Physicians' Guild (1979) "Letters ...," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 46 : No. 3 , Article 4.
Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol46/iss3/4>

Letters...

'Contagion of Irreverence'

To: Edward B. Hanify, Esq.

While visiting Fr. Raymond at Gethsemane last month, he gave me a copy of *The Linacre Quarterly*, February, 1979 issue, knowing that I would enjoy and appreciate your article "The Contagion of Irreverence." I took the journal home with me so that I could read it at my leisure.

I found your article so worthwhile that I felt it a must to write and congratulate you. I only wish that such valuable and relevant material could reach out over the confines of that select group to which you spoke, and be absorbed on a much larger scale.

Again, congratulations on your excellent talk — it couldn't have been better said.

Mrs. M. Dorothy Walsh
Forest City, Pa.

will not tolerate a single thought about radical change of this process to make it more human. This is all the more sad in schools that claim to be governed by a Christian philosophy.

Medical education must be radically changed. What it does to too many of the finest men and women in our nation is unethical, immoral and an educational disgrace. I would hope that the members of your Federation would take a truly active, inquiring interest in the Alma Mater and inquire whether or not they provide the kind of atmosphere that is needed for the development of a genuine physician, not merely a person who has "made it through" the school. Only when alumni begin to put pressure on the schools do I see any hope for a real change to a more humane and, in some cases, a more Christian approach to the training of the physicians of the future. From my experience, I would say that it has become a moral imperative that such changes be made, and made soon.

Robert D. Wheelock, OFM, Cap.
Campus Minister
St. Louis University Medical Center

On Benjamin Article

To the Editor:

The article by Walter Benjamin in your May issue entitled "Do You Want Johnny to Inherit Your Black Bag?" was of special interest to me. So much of what Doctor Benjamin says is of such crucial importance that it is a pity that the article is not likely to be read by more deans and deans of students than it probably will be.

As a pastor of a medical school that has just finished the year and is now going through the throes of counseling students who have failed and must repeat classes, or who are in trouble with one or the other subject and must worry about that as they prepare for the National Boards Part I, I sympathize with all that Doctor Benjamin writes about. It is such a terrible tragedy that so many people in education are irrevocably set in their ways and

On Barry Article

To the Editor:

I read with interest and satisfaction the article entitled "Self-Consciousness and Personhood," by Rev. Robert Barry, O.P., in the May, 1979 issue of *Linacre Quarterly*.

Why? The author has introduced the ontological dimension — basic in my judgment — in his criticism of Michael Tooley's position on personhood. Such an intervention appears most effective when Father Barry presents the "potentiality principle" as understood by Tooley. The flexibility allowed by Tooley to this principle contributes to a reductionism of the

human zygote to the status of *thing* — whether it be animal, vegetable or mineral — or to a stream of consciousness with personhood being a *happening* along the way.

Once again I was reminded of the horror of forms (formal causes) which haunted Descartes, and continues to upset many contemporary psychologists. However, modern genetics seems to have confirmed not only the existence of formal causes, but also their entitative and operational functions from the first moment of impregnation of the ovum by the sperm. It appears ontologically sound that the genetic endowment in the fertilized ovum could be matter properly disposed — and with the presence of the human soul containing formally the rationality of man, and virtually containing the sensitive and vegetative power also — thereby constituting person in the ontic sense.

Within these ontological parameters the unborn person — using an analogy of inequality — follows a continuous

process of human development from less differentiation and organization, e.g., from zygote, to embryo, to fetus, to infant — to a greater differentiation and organization, e.g., to child, to teenager, to adult, with the consequent complex interaction as social being.

Throughout this dynamic process the reality "person" is constant, yet there is an inequality of perfection manifested. Although the status of person is shared as a great perfection, yet with respect to greater perfection the human existent is in potentiality. In the ontological sense, then, one human being is not more of a person than another, but one person may become more of a person than another — and in the last analysis — the only perfect personalities are the saints becoming more saintly.

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NOTICE

In order to encourage the initiation of ethics rounds in hospitals, the Committee on Philosophy and Medicine of the American Philosophical Association is planning a brochure describing current programs and practical ideas for making them work. To this end, the Committee solicits correspondence from anyone who has had experience with such rounds. Please include information on how the rounds were started, the personnel involved, the format used, how cases are chosen, and how long the program has been in effect. Please send to Dr. R. E. Ladd, Department of Philosophy, Wheaton College, Norton, MA 02766.