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NEW YORK EXTENDS
WELCOME
TO
THE FEDERATION OF CATHOLIC PHYSICIANS' GUILD

The Honorable Robert F. Wagner, Mayor of New York City, welcomed the gathering at the Silver Jubilee dinner of The Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guild held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel on the evening of June 5. With permission we are including his remarks in this issue of THE LINACRE QUARTERLY.

I AM happy to join you on the 25th anniversary of the founding of your Federation. As Mayor of a city of eight million people, it is a great privilege to bid you welcome in their name. I trust that your stay with us has been and will continue to be both educational and pleasant.

It is particularly fitting that you should celebrate your Silver Jubilee in New York City. It was here, in 1927, after a closed retreat for members of the medical profession, that the first Guild for Catholic Physicians was born. Since that time Guilds have been organized in many other cities and twenty-five years ago the Federation was formed. Today, I understand, there are sixty-four member organizations. My congratulations to you, for, as a Catholic, it is particularly thrilling to know that there is a large body of doctors actively seeking counsel and moral guidance in the light of their Catholic teachings, and determined to integrate those teachings into their daily work.

In your sense of the word, I am a layman; but as Mayor of the

largest city in the world it is my duty to keep abreast of the developments in many fields of endeavor. I am, therefore, not unacquainted with, or unmindful of, the tremendous changes for the better which have taken place in medicine — with their resultant benefits to mankind. All of you can justifiably be proud of the accomplishments which we have seen during the past fifty years in medicine and surgery. It is of course true that the doctors have not been alone in their fight. They have had the help of those laboring in allied professions. Nevertheless, they have sparked a team under whose enlightened attack things thought impossible or never dreamed of have become realities.

The tremendous advances which medicine have made during the past century and the magnificent story which it has to tell of expanded services to the American people are without parallel in history. But with all our progress, there is still a long and rocky road ahead. New cures create demands for more cures. As in the case of tuberculosis, reduced need for hos-

pitalization may create increased need for special rehabilitation services. Even the increase in life expectancy itself brings with it new problems in the nature of chronic diseases and disabilities which are intimately associated with old age.

Little by little, as we lift the curtain of darkness which surrounds our knowledge and understanding of man's ills, we find that treatment and cure and prevention become one—that the physical and mental being merge and that the well-being of the body relates also to the well-being of the soul. It is no wonder that medicine in its beginning was closely allied to the priesthood and that this association now, more than ever before, is being reaffirmed.

There is an editorial entitled "God and the Physicians" in a recent issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Its theme dealt with increasing evidences of co-operation between physicians and the clergy. There can be no question but that the two professions most intimately involved in the welfare of the individual are religion and medicine and American medicine and religion are in closer accord today than ever before.

His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, in a message to a group of nutrition specialists emphasized the same thought when he said:

... But to the wider power of action won by modern medicine corresponds an increasing moral responsibility and the obligation to use these new achievements only with a view to mankind's true spiritual progress. Beyond a purely physical well-being and a perfectly balanced functioning of the body, you

must always keep your eye on the higher objective; that of placing the human being in a better position to answer to his transcendent destiny.

May God grant that the beneficiaries of your efforts and you, yourselves, in making the best possible use of earthly nourishment, will not forget that there is an incomparably more precious spiritual food which, helping simultaneously body and soul, alone can give men the immortality to which they aspire.

The meeting of medicine and religion is not a new concept; it is only its resurgence which excites us. The Catholic Church has for more than nineteen hundred years had an intimate relationship with healing mankind in both body and soul. The pagan world studied healing for the relief only of those who could afford medicine and for the preservation of the lives and working power of their slaves. But the Catholic Church was the first to consider its application to the whole human race, especially to the poor. Our Church has always come forward to help the sick and unfortunate. Catholic training has ever formed a firm foundation and a bulwark against the forces of evil everywhere. In the modern era the contributions have been stupendous. Institutions for the care of all types of maladies have been established throughout the world. Medical schools of preeminence have added immeasurably to the knowledge of your profession. Service is being rendered to people without regard to financial status, creed, or race. They pass on to you a heritage of unselfish devotion unsurpassed in the history of mankind.

I know you will meet the challenge. Individuals such as you live and work according to conscience.

You have great regard for the concept of the dignity of man which cannot but help influence your continued service to your fellowmen. Working together in mutual trust and confidence with respect for one another, and with an abiding faith in God, you will not fail in the work entrusted to you. And so, gentlemen, I salute you, and the many other Catholic physicians who have been apostolic leaders in the medical profession.

May I leave you with the words of Dr. Francis W. Peabody of Harvard:

The good physician knows his patients thru and thru, and his knowledge is bought dearly. Time, sympathy and understanding must be lavishly dispensed; but the reward is to be found in that personal bond which forms the greatest satisfactions of the practice of medicine. One of the essential qualities is interest in humanity; for the secret of the care of the patient is *caring* for the patient.

Thank you and may God bless you in your work.

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