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## Moderator's Message

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## Moderator's Message

"The joys and the hopes, the sorrows and the anxieties of the men of this age, these are the joys and the hopes, the sorrows and the anxieties of the followers of Christ."

As I sit down to write my first "Message" as Moderator of the National Federation, this opening line of Vatican II's Constitution on *The Church in the Modern World* comes immediately to mind.

I know that I should express thanks very early to the Federation's Board of Directors for nominating me; to Bishop McDonough for appointing me; and to my own Ordinary, Bishop Greco, for allowing me to accept this appointment as your spiritual advisor. This I do most sincerely.

But I come back to my distraction — a fruitful one I hope — with the opening sentence of the Council regarding the action of the Church in the world. My first reaction is that the Council's statement is not true — not true if taken as a statement of fact.

My second observation is that this introductory sentence of the Constitution might serve as necessary food for thought for members of the Guilds. What do I mean? Am I missing the point of Vatican II? Naive about the good work of the Church and of the Federation? Or, just plain pessimistic? What a horrible way to lead off in my chaplaincy!

Let's back up a bit.

I believe that the Holy Spirit is really setting up an ideal for us children of the Church by stating through the Council that we must *identify* with the men of this age. For a long time we have been in a posture of defense, of combat, even of spiritual incest, as we cared for our own, defended our own, promoted our own. Let us not judge the past; all this may have been entirely good and necessary.

The fact remains, I believe, that we do not yet identify with the *men of this age* — Catholics and those who are not; Americans and those who are not; Caucasians and those who are not; the rich and those who are not; members of the Catholic Physicians' Guilds and those who are not; etc., etc. At least now is the time for examination, for reform, for renewal.

How perfect are we? How far have we come in attaining the Holy Spirit's ideal of full identification with the condition of the men of this age, the whole human family?

Finally, when Vatican II says, "The Church in the Modern World," does this key phrase in the Church today not apply par excellence to Christian and Catholic doctors? Who else will *be* Christ, *be* the Church in the whole, vast world-wide task of healing the men of this age?

Just as Vatican II (our bishops in the Holy Spirit) explored — and set the stage for further exploration — of all the possibilities for the Church's collaboration with all men of good will in every field of human endeavor, so too, quite pointedly, it seems to be the task of Christian doctors today to do just that, as Church, in the proper field of medicine. That is my hope for the Federation!

Very Reverend Monsignor Marvin Bordelon