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Why the Catholic Physicians' Guild?

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WHY THE CATHOLIC PHYSICIANS' GUILDS ?

THERE is an idea prevalent that these Guilds are medical societies, the members whereof are Catholics. Nothing is more erroneous than this. There are too many medical societies in existence now, and Catholics do not need any to be organized for them, they being welcome as members in all medical organizations. It therefore is clear that the Guilds must be something quite different from the professional societies, something that these societies cannot offer, something essentially Catholic and attuned to Catholic ideas and doctrines. To understand what this special Guild outlook means, it is necessary to come down to the fundamental facts of our existence on earth and to examine our relationship to our Maker and our responsibilities to Him as medical men. If a Guild is to be effective, it must easily fit itself into the demands laid upon us in the Catechism. In proportion as we as members place ourselves and our work in relation to God and try to carry out the fundamental commands He has imposed upon us, in like proportion will the work and the outlook of the Guilds become His work and thereby achieve its true aim as a Catholic organization.

A Guild, then, is an organization the avowed objects of which are the fulfillment of Catholic aims and ideals as they apply to medical men. It therefore has a spiritual basis which, while supplying us with a fundamental principle of action, will give us something to strive for and which must become part and parcel of our whole lives as Catholic physicians. Primarily this is an individual matter, something that is not worth much otherwise, because we cannot serve God other than as individuals. The Guild's function is in helping to train and arm its members so they can function properly. An untrained Catholic doctor is a definite point of weakness and danger, not only to himself as a Catholic and physician, but to the Church, the laws of God (which are really the laws of nature), the proper attitude toward work in the profession, and that of resisting pagan matters, such as birth control, sterilization of the unfit, euthanasia, etc. For this to be genuine and effective it must be preceded by a knowledge of God and of His Church which many Catholic physicians have and maintain, but which some have lost sight of, much to their own unhappiness and dissatisfaction

without their actually appreciating the main reason they lack in contentments. The Guild's desires should be to strengthen the weak and make happier the strong of Catholic physicians, and to accomplish this the spiritual side of the Guild cannot be too strongly or too frequently stressed. The spiritual must be the foundation of our every effort, for without it the Guilds will fail as a Catholic activity and achieve no more than a professional debating or clinical society.

Here undoubtedly is the true outlook which we as Guild members must keep before us at all times. To accomplish it there should be no hesitation for a Catholic physician to join or to find time to attend the meetings and take an active part in the proceedings. Such should be pleasing to God and part of the essential duty of a Catholic physician to his Church and profession. The Catholic physician, having a true spiritual outlook, can and will become a vehicle for incalculable good. What greater than this can a physician accomplish for himself as a practitioner or himself as a human being? If the spirit of a Guild is right, we may rest assured that everything else that is good will follow. The work which individually or collectively we undertake in the Guild movement is not only our own work, it is work for God and He is the worker, we but the instruments, and our duty is to make ourselves willing instruments.

The Guilds in this country have already accomplished remarkable things for the good of all, most worthwhile accomplishments for the times in which we live. Let us remember that we are not to measure results with purely human scales. As dispensers of the wonderful healing powers which God has given to man, we physicians should realize the very high place to which He has called us, and we should keep in mind that with high position there goes also heavy responsibilities and that it is our duty to try to be worthy in them.

If you are a Catholic physician join the Guild in your locality. If there is none, join the nearest to you, or form a new Guild in your city or a group in your hospital, even if the membership be limited to a few. If that is not practical, join as an associate member of the Federation so you are part of this excellent movement.* If already a member of a Guild attend the meetings, be active and try to be punctual.—By THE EDITOR.

* Address of the officers of the Federation is on page 14. For information address Madeline McGregor, Executive Secretary of the Federation, Catholic Charities Building, 477 Madison Avenue, New York City.