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"COME ASIDE AND REST AWHILE"

BY REVEREND DANIEL F. HART, S.J.

MOUNT MANRESA, STATEN ISLAND, N. Y.

In May of 1927 sixty physicians from Brooklyn and New York made a closed retreat at Mount Manresa, Staten Island. This was the beginning of the Catholic Physicians' Guild of Brooklyn, from which the Guilds of Bronx and Manhattan developed.

It is generally contended that physicians cannot get away from their practice and patients for two full days. Fifteen years of retreats for the Physicians' Guild of Brooklyn seem to be a sufficient answer to that assertion. There have been very few emergency calls for doctors while on retreat. Two years ago there were two calls late Saturday night. Both doctors went to Brooklyn, took care of their patients and were back on Staten Island for Mass at seven o'clock. This we think should show clearly how important these men consider their yearly retreat.

For those unacquainted with retreats we may say that a retreat is time spent alone with God. It is a time to think, to take stock of our spiritual liabilities that we may remove them; of our spiritual assets that we may increase them. It is a time to discover the ills of our souls that we may cure them. During a retreat we put aside the troubles and confusion of the world and consider our purpose in that world. It is refreshing spiritually and physically and prepares us to face the world again with renewed strength.

Pope Pius XI, by special benediction, given July 25, 1922, set the seal of his approval upon the work at Mount Manresa by declaring that the value of retreats, made according to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, has been proved by the "experience of the last three centuries . . . and by

the witness of all who during that time put forth the fairest flowers of religious training and of holiness of life."

As recently as December 20, 1929, Pope Pius XI issued a special encyclical in favor of retreats, strongly recommending "those spiritual exercises which are made in private"—according to which method the retreats at Mount Manresa are conducted.

Pope Pius X regarded a retreat as one of the most effective agencies in the task that he had set himself of "restoring all things in Christ."

Under the inspiration of such authoritative sanction an earnest appeal is made to every Catholic layman to avail himself of the opportunity of making a retreat.

These retreats are made by all classes of men. In the vicinity of New York, besides Mount Manresa, there is a retreat house at Morristown, conducted by the Jesuits, one in Jamaica conducted by the Passionists, and one in West

End where the Redemptorists are in charge. In any of these houses you will find retreats for all different classes of working men and the different groups of professional men. It probably should not be said that physicians need retreats any more than any other class of men, but it does seem true that they could do more for others with the help they themselves receive during a retreat. Many people who are timid about approaching a priest will not, hesitate to speak to their family physician about the ills of their soul as well as those of their body. The ever increasing moral problems today are frequently solved by Catholic physicians by a word of advice and an explanation of Catholic ethics.

A retreat offers rest and recreation for the body and helps in the re-creation of the soul. A good physician must be a good man. A retreat will help him to that end. "Come aside and rest awhile" with Christ.

Questions and Answers

Recently an attending physician in a Catholic hospital was asked by some of the Catholic internes if it were proper to give contraceptive advice to a non-Catholic woman. The answer of course, is "No," because no one is permitted to recommend a violation of the moral law, which transcends all others. Again the ques-

tion was asked if the Catholic interne in a non-Catholic hospital may carry out the orders of his Chief to perform a therapeutic abortion or to prophylactically sterilize a woman after Caesarian section. The answer again is "No," because no one has the authority to command an immoral act.

—Excerpt from THE LINACRE QUARTERLY, April, 1939.