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## Where Are the Doctors?

Edward G. Kilroy

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## Where Are the Doctors?

The past ten years have been characterized by massive behavioral and attitudinal changes in our society. At the core of these changes has been a completely uninhibited and almost unthinking rejection of authority and experience, perhaps made possible by an affluence which permits the individual and his life style to survive the effects of errors, which in more stringent times might have resulted in moral, economic, or even physical disaster. We have seen marked increases in violence, crime, pornography, drug addiction, child abuse, rape, dehumanizing rural and urban poverty, hedonistic materialism, divorce, infidelity, prostitution, contraception, sterilization, abortion, and now proposals for euthanasia. This almost overwhelming, all pervasive, tide of change is characterized by a marked decrease in regard for the value of human life and the aroma of moral decay.

There have been valiant efforts to stem and reverse this tide in human affairs by the churches, both Catholic and those of other denominations. The Right to Life movement and groups active in the area of social concerns have made notable contributions. Local Catholic Physicians' Guilds and our national organization have done their best. Many individual physicians have given unstintingly of their time and talents. But where are the rest of the doctors? Why have so many knowledgeable physicians remained on the sidelines? In a time when the challenge to Catholic moral precepts in medicine has mounted its most sustained and effective attack, why has the membership and activity of our local guilds fallen off? Where are the doctors on the local hospital staff who will stand and be counted when controversial proposals are made? Where are the physicians to participate in public debate and educational activities for school, civic organizations, and the media?

Granted that we physicians have been demoralized by the rejection of our experience and authority, not only by our patients and our government, but even by our Church and members of our own family. Isn't it about time that we, as the unique individuals in our society possessed of the background, training, knowledge, and experience to assert authority in the medical affairs of our society, embark on a course of activism to reestablish our proper place of leadership?

I hope that each Catholic physician reading this page will resolve to make his presence felt in his own medical pond. Join your local Catholic Physicians Guild, get active, get your friends involved. If you do not assume responsibility for your own turf there is truly no one else who can.

Edward G. Kilroy, M.D.