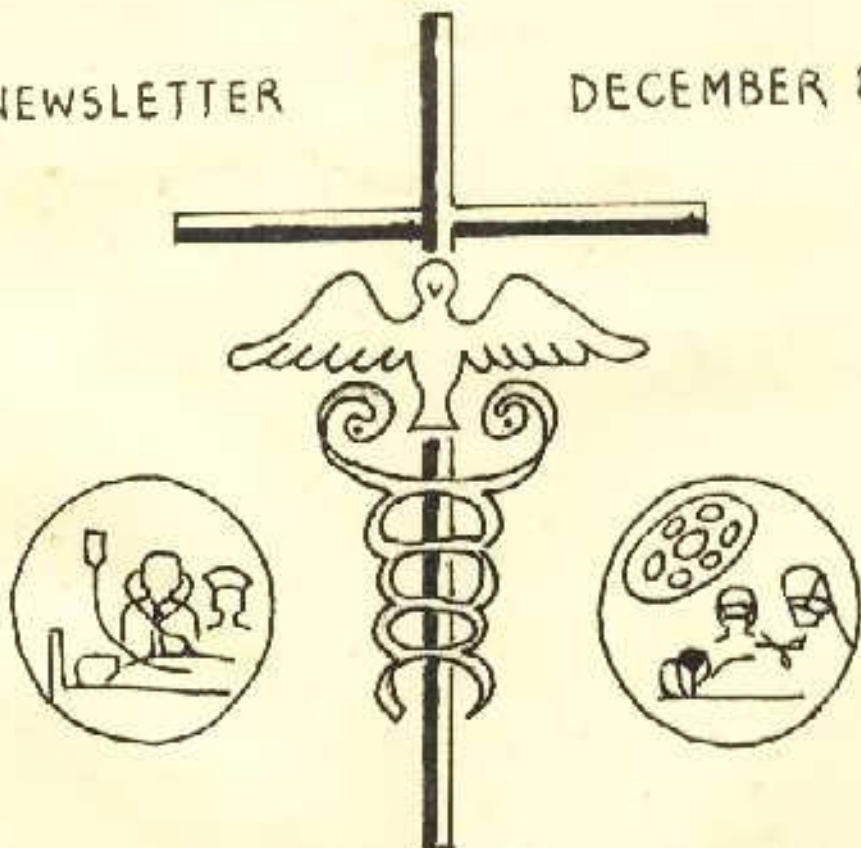


Guild of Saints Luke Damian & Cosmas

NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 84



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The Newsletter is published by the Publication Subcommittee
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FEATURE:

THE GUILD
OF SAINT LUKE
SAINTS COSMAS & DAMIAN

SAINT LUKE, SAINTS COSMAS AND DAMIAN

We know practically nothing about the Luke who has always been regarded as the author of the Acts of the Apostles and the gospel that bears his name. From internal evidence the third gospel was clearly written by a non-Jewish Christian (from Antioch?) and destined for a similar readership. In addition there are a few scattered references to Luke in the pauline letters, where he appears as Paul's companion and fellow-worker. Writing from prison in Rome, Paul says that, of all his friends, only Luke has remained with him. In his letter to the Colossians Paul describes Luke as the 'beloved physician'. Some bible scholars - though less frequently today - try to show that the gospel according to St. Luke and the Acts display a specialised knowledge of medical terminology. Other scholars, however, consider the case not proven, but would agree that there is certainly nothing in Luke's gospel or the Acts which would rule out a physician as their author.

The great Italian poet Dante calls Luke the scriba mansuetudinis Christi, the sweet singer of the tenderness of Christ. For his gospel stresses the divine mercy and the tender compassion of Christ. It includes parables and incidents which bring out the breadth of Jesus' compassion, and which are not found in the other gospels.

According to legend, St. Luke was an artist and painted many pictures of our Lady. It is of interest to recall that the picture of our blessed Mother that Matteo Ricci brought to Peking as a present for the Emperor was a reproduction of a painting attributed to St. Luke.

Because he was a physician and a man of great compassion, the Church has named St. Luke as the heavenly patron of doctors. His feast falls on 18 October.

Nothing is known about Saints Cosmas and Damian beyond the fact that they suffered martyrdom in Syria during the persecution that raged under the emperor Diocletian (therefore in the first decade of the fourth century). A church built on the site of their burial place was enlarged in the middle of the sixth century

by the emperor Justinian. This imperial interest is not surprising since devotion to these two Christian martyrs had spread very quickly in both the eastern and western halves of the old Roman Empire. A famous basilica was built in their honour in Constantinople, and there the faithful used to flock in search of cures for their various illnesses. Earlier in that same sixth century, Pope Felix IV had joined two ancient pagan temples in Rome to form a basilica dedicated to Cosmas and Damian. A more recent church still stands on the same spot today, close by the Roman Forum.

Legend has it that Cosmas and Damian were brothers, born in Arabia; that they were physicians who practised their art with great charity and would not accept fees from their patients. The story of their being doctors possibly arose out of the popularity enjoyed by the basilica in Constantinople with its wide reputation as a place of healing. From the sixth century right up to the Second Vatican Council the memory of Sts. Cosmas and Damian was invoked every time Mass was celebrated. Today they are still included in the longer, optional, list of saints in the first Eucharistic Prayer.

Their feast is celebrated on 27 September and with St. Luke they are honoured as the heavenly patrons of doctors.

-Rev. Fr. J. Russell, S.J.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE HONG KONG GUILD OF ST. LUKE
STS. COSMAS AND DAMIAN

Fr. Ladany, then living in Ricci Hall as he is at present, asked a number of Catholic doctors to go there for a Retreat from March 21 to 23, 1953. The retreat was given by Fr. M. Mansfield, then a lecturer in H.K.U. in Economics and also living in Ricci. About twenty doctors attended, and since it was a live-in retreat in Ricci, they were necessarily all men. At the after-dinner discussion it was decided to start a Catholic Doctors Guild. Dr. A.P. Guterres, chairman of the temporary organizing committee, wrote to Bishop Lawrence Bianchi for his views and received a reply on March 26, in which he said, "The idea meets with my cordial approval.... I shall be glad to be kept informed of the practical results of your efforts, of the exact name of the future Society, its objects and rules, in order to give my formal approval." The first Annual Report gives the story:

"For some time past the Catholic doctors of Hong Kong have felt the need for the establishment of an organization to promote their mutual welfare, both professionally and spiritually, as well as to provide opportunities and facilities for social gatherings, medical discussions etc. in accordance with the principles of Catholic medical ethics.

"With these various aims in view the Guild of St. Luke, Sts. Cosmas and Damian was formed, on May 28, 1953, as a result of a General Meeting which took place at the Catholic Centre."

From the beginning the Guild became active. Even in the first year it held, first of all, a Cocktail Party, on July 29 to celebrate its founding at which the bishop and about 100 persons attended; then two meetings which were also well attended were organized in which three doctors presented some problems that they in their specializations had come across and two priests, professors of Moral Theology in the Seminary, gave their views on the ethical implications involved. For the second of these meetings, the Warden of Ricci Hall, tried to get some medical students to attend, and I quote from his circular:

"On Wednesday, December 2nd, 1953, at 7:30 p.m., the Guild of St. Luke, (the local Catholic Medical Association) is holding a meeting. It consists of Dinner, and after dinner some Medico-Ethical Problems will be dealt with. The method of dealing with these problems, which are of Medical, Surgical, and Gynaecological interest, is to have a Doctor give his views on some practical problems involving ethical matters, after which one of the Professors of Moral Theology of the Regional Seminary, Aberdeen, will deal with the general Ethical principles involved. Afterwards there is a general discussion in which slightly different varieties of the case are gone into, and the various aspects of doctor-patient relationship are discussed. These discussions have in the past been most interesting and, I am convinced, useful to all the doctors present.... If any student of this Hostel is interested in attending on Wednesday night, or if any Clinical Year standing of the University wished to attend, they will be most welcome. Of course they must pay for their dinner (a mere \$6.00).... I am quite sure they will find it most interesting, useful, and enjoyable. They will also meet many of the Medical Profession of Hong Kong."

Other activities of that first year were: a Communion Breakfast held on the Feast of St. Luke, and Annual Retreat attended by twenty-five doctors, and regular voluntary service by members who offered their service to two Free Clinics. In this latter connection I quote from a speech of Fr. Cronin at the official opening of the Guild:

"No one will deny them (i.e. doctors) a right to a good and comfortable livelihood, they work hard and they have positions of extreme responsibility and care. But they will not, I am convinced, keep alive their ideals unless they have some practice which is purely charitable, and so I am very glad that the Master, Dr. Gutierrez, has referred to the need for doctors to help in free clinics, and gave specific instances of such need and how any doctor could find an opportunity for joining in such useful work."

The membership at the end of the first year stood at sixty-eight, which must have included, in those days, nearly all the Catholic doctors in practice in Hong Kong.

After the first year the annual retreat was held alternately in Wah Yan College Kowloon and Wah Yan College Hong Kong, and as there was no overnight accommodation the retreat began to be attended by lady doctors also.

Another development was the annual outing to some place usually in the New Territories. The Guild went to "Dragon Gardens", also to Dr. Y.Y. Tang's house near Tsuen Wan, and often to a house near Castle Peak which had very large grounds and a magnificent swimming pool. Again I quote from a circular regarding one such picnic:

"The catering will be undertaken by Dairy Farm Agents of 11½ Mile Lido at the cost of \$5 per head. There will be no charge for children. Members of the Guild, their wives, families and friends are invited."

One of the problems that all members of the Guild are conscious of is that of poor attendance at meetings. Even in the early days this was also true. Sister Gabriel, the second Hon. Sec. of the Guild, wrote in 1954:

"We wish to remind members that recent functions of the Guild have been very poorly attended, and unless each member considers it his duty give his full support to this potent form of Catholic Action, stressed so much by the Holy Father, the Guild will never achieve anything in Hong Kong. At the Annual General Meeting, only twelve members attended, and at the very important talk on Birth Control, given by Fr. O'Hara, S.J., only the same number turned up."

Possibly because of the need to attract more members to the A.G.M. it became the custom to invite some very interesting speaker to propose the toast of the Guild and to add some interesting remarks of his own on some topic of current interest.

But for other lectures it was more difficult to get doctors to attend, and this is a constant theme of Masters at the annual meetings, but doctors in Hong Kong are no different from those elsewhere in this matter. The Annual Mass was always a fairly well attended function, I quote from one circular about it:

"The Annual Mass for the feast of St. Luke will be held in Wah Yan College Kowloon on Sunday, October 17, at

9 a.m. (by kind permission of Rev. Fr. Rector S.J.). Breakfast will be served after Mass at the cost of \$2.50 per head."

After some years Hospital Sunday began to be celebrated on the Sunday nearest to St. Luke's feast and it was, for Catholics, celebrated in St. Joseph's Church, and attended by nurses and all concerned with the care of the sick, as well as doctors. I think it requires constant urging by the Guild officers to get doctors to attend in any number, and maybe it might consider going back to the former custom of having a Communion Breakfast once a year which could be attended by the families of the doctors also.

There are many other matters concerned with the early days of the Guild that I could mention; for example, from the first it included dentists, and one of them, Dr. Francis C.T. Sun, was among its most popular Hon. Secretaries. It produced, or possibly copied for a similar one used elsewhere, a Code of Medical Ethics for Catholic Hospitals. It participated in regional meetings of Catholic Doctors and even hosted one for Asian doctors in the early seventies, which was attended by about a hundred overseas visitors. It got very much involved in a campaign against the passing of the Abortion Law and tried if not to prevent abortion completely at least to make it less freely available.

Looking back to the past may make us think that things were better then, but I am sure that it is better to look to the future for there are many areas in which Catholic doctors could get into that could benefit them and also their patients. I think in the past the stress was on friendly contact between Catholic doctors, and lectures on medico-ethical subjects, and attendance at meetings and religious functions, but nowadays Catholics, and this includes doctors, are also thinking of such activities as prayer groups, scripture study circles, and other activities which promote the internal spiritual life of the doctor.

INTRODUCING THE PRESENT COUNCIL OF THE GUILD

Spiritual Director - Rev. Fr. J. Russell, S.J.

Warden of Ricci Hall, University of Hong Kong.

Hon. Adviser - Rev. Fr. F. Cronin, S.J.

Our past Spiritual Director.

Master - Vincent Tse

Graduated 1969; oncologist working in Radiotherapy Department, QEH.

Hon. Secretary - Richard Lui

Graduated 1974; gynaecologist in Kwong Wah Hospital.

Hon. Treasurer - Kevin Tong

Graduated 1969; surgeon in private practice.

Liaison and Hospitality Officer - Sr. M. Aquinas

Our past master. Chest consultant of Ruttonjee Sanatorium, our beloved teacher. Often called upon as the 'Guardian Angel' of the Guild.

Council Members -

George Chan

Graduated 1977; Clinical Pathologist in Haematology, Department of Pathology, HKU.

Chan Wai Kai

Immediate past master. Graduated 1946; ophthalmologist in private practice.

Emmanuel Chang

Graduated 1954; in private practice. Our master in 1976 and 1977.

Stephen Foo

Graduated 1966; in private practice.

Sr. M. Gabriel

Our past master. The other 'Guardian Angel' of the Guild. Also a chest consultant of Ruttonjee Sanatorium.

Stephen Law

Graduated 1980; works in Radiotherapy Department, QEH. Married on 11-11-84.

Diana Siu

Graduated 1975; medical oncologist in private practice.

Rebecca Wang

Graduated 1973; Senior Lecturer in Medicine, HKU.

TO PONDER

A section on articles and books

ON READING "THE THIRD DIMENSION OF MEDICINE"

Dr. Paul Towmier was 80 in 1978 and has retired after fifty years of general practice when he wrote the speech 'Relationships - The Third Dimension of Medicine' for the Ecumenical Centre, Geneva, where the annual meetings for the Medicine of the Whole Person were held.

He described the problem thus: "We SPEAK of faith in religious gatherings, but then we PRACTICE medicine as we've been taught it in medical school." And he suggested that we could interject our faith into the practice of our profession: "What is SPIRITUAL in us is our need for relationships with our neighbour, nature, society and God."

He gave us an example of a good way for sharing and mutual support in faith: "To get the whole picture of a person, a doctor must enter into a personal relationship with him as a whole being. To do so, he must learn to open himself up. But nothing happens to the doctors themselves as long as they only talk in meetings. That's why in our group we would not only discuss our medical works but also relate to each other about personal matters: why we become doctors, what's our doubts, failures, regrets, how we felt when we were ill ourselves. Many famous doctors who although they may lecture all over the world, when alone with others in a private room, are at a loss for words. Our whole upbringing and schooling trained us to be objective. We find it hard to be subjective and personal. I certainly do."

He emphasised the value of MEANING. "In this era when the malady of the epoch is, according to Viktor Frankl, repression of meaning: pretending to ignore the question of the meaning of life, of death, of sickness, (Frankl occupies the chair at the University of Vienna, once held by Sigmund Freud for whom the problem was repression of sex), Frankl said people no longer blush about sexuality, they blush about religion. Science cannot solve the problem of meaning. The scientific vision of the world is a collection of phenomena going round and round along the trajectory of chance or hazard. Spirituality means looking for relationships and recognizing that it is our relationship to God which gives meaning to nature. But hazard is the god which men of science worship."

And "the third dimension of medicine is to help our patients

to become PERSONS, aware of their responsibility for themselves again, regaining a meaning. In other words, we ask ourselves what God is saying to us through illness.

"When death of a patient is near, the problem of relationships and meaning of life really presents itself. This is when there is a great need for a personal relationship between the patient and his doctor, and for the doctor to accompany his patient right to the end. This is spiritual love."

It is an excellent short piece, stimulating and enlightening, giving me a direction of how I want to lead my life, unifying professional and spiritual dimensions of my life. It gives me material to develop a satisfying approach to important and frequently encountered problems in my professional life - facing a dying patient, sufferings and tragedies without apparent meanings.

I need a group like Dr. Towmier's group to help me in my personal growth.

-Anthony Tam

(Note: Those who would like to read the original article please contact one of the members of the Publication Subcommittee.)

J. Dominian has some practical hints on the translation of the ingredients of Christian life (faith, hope, love) into action in his article Doctor as Prophet (Br. Med. J. v287:1925).

This article helps the reader to ponder deeper into people's common expectations of doctors and how to transform the ordinary into divine. It is a mind opener; good material for repeated reading before meditation, or for doctors who wish to share their experience of faith and practice with their contemporaries.

* * * * *

At 16th week the unborn child shies away from light, at 20th, there is a response to speech patterns, 25th can kick in time to music: Thomas Verry's The Secret Life of the Unborn Child (Sphere Books).

Verry is a psychiatrist in Toronto. His material are taken from studies from Stockholm, Paris, Austria, London, Berkeley California, Esalen California, and the Max Planck Institute in Munich. A good list of reference at the back.

* * * * *

Breaking bad news: why is it still so difficult? R. Buckman, Br. Med. J. v.288:1597.

It sounds cruel to sound a cautious note (after surgery). It is easy to agree.....that the patient is cured.....The problem is that if a cure is promised (when it is not possible) any future relapse will be seen as personal failure of the doctor. The patient will (probably) see it that way, and the doctor.....may subsequently avoid contact.....

Good discussion on some fears that doctors may have.

* * * * *

COMING EVENTS OF THE GUILD

1. **FAMILY MASS** ON Sunday, 6 January 1985, at 10 a.m.
As in previous years this Mass will be held in the chapel of the Diocese Centre, 130 Waterloo Road (Maryknoll Convent). Friends and family members are also welcome to join us.

2. **RUTTONJEE MINI-SEMINAR** on Friday, 11 January 1985, at 7 p.m. We have already held five such meetings and they have been well attended by nurses, medical students and some doctors. These mini-seminars on chosen subjects are an excellent opportunity for you to share your experience. The January meeting will be held as usual in the Nurse Sitting Room, Ruttonjee Sanitorium. The topic for this next meeting will be announced later. Please come and join us. The traditional Ruttonjee hospitality will be offered.

The angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very day in David's town your Saviour was born - Christ the Lord!" (Luke 2:10-11)

WORDS FROM THE MASTER

Dear Members,

I hope you have enjoyed reading this first issue of the Newsletter.

This represents our attempt to form a link with, and to provide a forum for, our members. We can only try to improve the quality of this publication and include articles of special interest, but to make it successful we need YOUR support.

To the senior members of the Guild I ask for your advice and the generous sharing of your precious experience.

To the younger members I want your active participation and the gift of your vigour and ideal.

We need your support for the functioning of the Guild too. Kindly give our activities a bit of your time, and also your suggestions on any activity or voluntary work which you think may be of interest to our Guild members.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank members of the Publication Subcommittee - Robert Yuen, George Chan, Anthony Tam, Stephen Law and Vincent Chan - for their effort in bringing out this publication.

May God bless us all.

Yours in Christ,
Vincent Tse