
NEWSLETTER

Autumn 95

The Guild of St. Luke, SS Cosmas & Damian

FROM THE POPE

From the desk of the Editor

Welcome to our new council. Among the many familiar faces, there are young and new ones. We hope that the new blood can give our Guild new strength and courage to face the world. In this issue, there are reports of our Guild's activities at the end of the last council years. There are also plans for the coming months. The Pope's message of the World Day of the Sick is very reflective. It reminds us of the coming Medical Sunday in October. Do remember to come and join with the celebration.

September is the month of election. The media is flooded with words and images of the legislative Council candidates. Behind these busy scene of politics, the issue of euthanasia quietly creeps into Hong Kong. Articles have been published in the current issues of HKMA

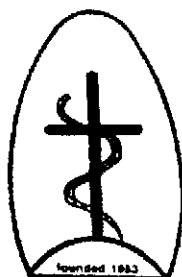
Newsletters and the "Synapse" of HK College of Physicians. Our council is alert of this and is preparing ourselves to face the challenge again. It is a battle to protect the human dignity. Please take note of any future appeal from us and join in the defense.

Francis Mok

From the Spiritual Director

Earlier this year Pope John-Paul II issued an important encyclical letter on the value and inviolability of human life, entitled The Gospel (i.e. Good News) of Life.

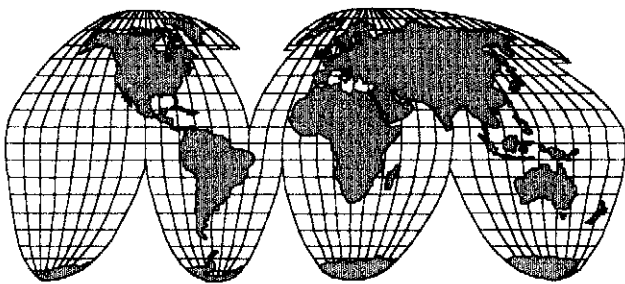
In his analysis of the world today the Pope paints a rather grim picture of "an



Inside This Issue

- 1 From the Editor
 - 2 From our Spiritual Director
 - 3 From the Council
 - 4 The AGM & Retreat
 - 5 Message to the Carers
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enormous and dramatic clash between good and evil, death and life, the culture of death and culture of life". He sees that all of us are not only faced with but of necessity in the midst of this conflict, and he urges us to choose to be unconditionally pro-life. He reminds us of Moses' invitation to the people of Israel: "See, I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live" (Deuteronomy 30:15, 19). The Pope sees this invitation as very timely for all of us today as we are called to the duty of choosing between the culture of life and the culture of death.



Those who hold that every human life has dignity, destiny and sacredness sometimes speak of an ethic of life that is consistent, across the board. This ethic of life challenges the culture of death which allows war and the arms trade, violence and terrorism, State-sanctioned torture and capital punishment, and which sees suicide, abortion and euthanasia as practical ways of resolving difficult human issues. More than ever before there is need to oppose this culture of death with a culture of life which offers, especially to young people, a future full of hope. A culture of life demands public policies which divert resources from the international traffic in arms, policies that favour a better quality of life for all, and especially for the underprivileged of society, policies that promote practicable alternatives to situations where death, one's own or another's, seems a compelling option.

NEWSLETTER

In his encyclical the Pope points to threats to life when it is at its most vulnerable: life in the womb threatened by abortion, and life at its other extreme threatened by euthanasia. It is towards this latter threat that the whole community of Hong Kong, and the medical profession in particular, will have to focus their attention. Recently the Northern Territory, one of the States of Australia, passed laws that effectively legalise voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide. In Holland, while the law does not actually legalise active euthanasia, it is understood that no action will be taken against medical personnel who engage in mercy killing and assisted suicide, if they inform the authorities concerned of what they have done.

Presumably because of the Australian and Dutch initiatives, Mrs Katherine Fok, secretary of Health and Welfare, announced some time ago, in a written reply to query raised in the Legislative Council, that the District Boards would be consulted on whether to legalise euthanasia in Hong Kong. She noted that changes had taken place outside the Territory since Government's last consultation exercise two year ago. She therefore thought it appropriate to see whether local attitudes might not also have changed.

Our Guild will certainly be consulted on this issue. Now is the time for all of us to reflect on this important question and decide what stance we want to adopt. Do we wish to be unconditionally pro-life? Do we want to promote the culture of death or the culture of life?



Council News

AGM 95

It was held on 9 June 95 at the Caritas Restaurant, Caine Road. As in the past two years, it was followed by a thanksgiving mass at the Cathedral. New council members were elected and both the Annual Report and the Financial Report were adopted. Miss Anne Decortis, HK director of Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) was our guest of honour. She talked about the development and the work of MSF which interested us all. The environment in which these doctors worked and the nature of their job differed greatly from what we experienced day to day and this gave some inspiration and stimulation to us who had listened.

Our New Council

Master Ho Hiu Fai, Paul
 Hon. Sec. Yeung Mei Wan, Rebecca
 Hon. Treas. Law Wing Sze
 Im. Past Mas. Francis Mok
 Spirit. Adv. Rev. Fr. John Russell

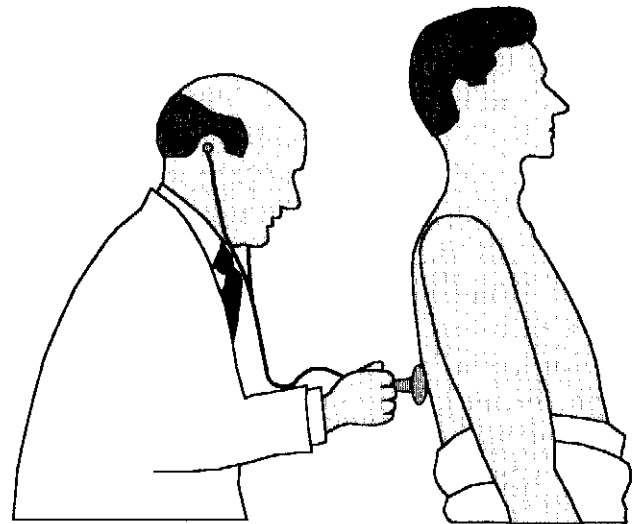
Council Members:

Lo shek Man
 Fung Chiu Fai
 Au Yeung Kai Ming, Paul
 Lam Chui Wah, Linda
 Yeung Hon Ming, Jonas
 Chung Ting On, Boscoss
 Tsang Sau Hang, Caroline
 Poon Chi Ming, Michael
 Tsang Sam Fung,, Anthony
 Chan Kwok Keung

GRADUATION MASS 95

The graduation mass was held on the 24th June at the Catholic Institute for Religion and Society. It is our pleasure to invite Rev. John K.T. Kwan as the chief celebrant and he shared with us his experience of being a

NEWSLETTER



“Doctor of the Soul”. His sharing is in common with the “Doctor of the Body” in many aspects and very applicable to our profession.

After the mass, we spent the afternoon with our fresh graduates, with an exchange of experience, expectations as well as realities about our career. The gathering was enjoyable and meaningful and we hope that more members can join in this occasion in the coming year.

Caroline Tsang

The First Council Meeting

The first Council Meeting was held on 4.7.95. A number of issues were discussed.

The Guild will continue to send representatives to the Birthright Society, Federation of Medical Societies and HK Central Council of Catholic Laity.

Our new student coordinator for HKU will be Anthony Tsang, Michael Poon and Paul Au Yeung. Caroline Tsang will be responsible for CU.

Since the medical students were the potential new blood for the Guild, active recruitment for student participation would be needed. The Guild coordinators will make an effort to introduce our Guild to Catholic medical students of the two Universities.

The creation of a "Student Page" in our Newsletter was raised. Contribution from students are welcome.

It was suggested that a core group could be set up which consisted of priests and Guild members who are interested in medical ethics. The core group could adopt a more active role of initiation to identify important ethical issues for discussion.

The possibility of establishing a Catholic Doctors Fellowship Group in each hospital was discussed.

World Day of the Sick

"A commitment seeking to cancel out today's injustices to the poor"

(extracted from DECISIONS - Journal of International Federation of Catholic Medical Associations Summer 1994)

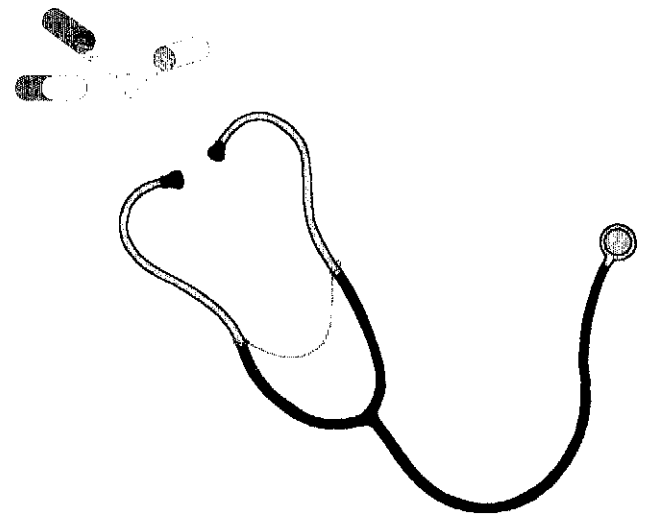
This is the message sent by the Pope on February 11th, 1993, the first World Day of the Sick.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Christian community has always paid particular attention to the sick and the world of suffering in its multiple manifestations. In the wake of such a long tradition, the universal Church, with a renewed spirit of service, is preparing to celebrate the first World Day of the Sick as a special occasion for growth, with an attitude of listening, reflection and effective

NEWSLETTER

commitment in the face of the great mystery of pain and illness. This Day, which, beginning in February 1993, will be celebrated every year on the commemoration of Our Lady of Lourdes, for all believers seeks to be "an intense moment of prayer, sharing, offering suffering for the good of the Church, and a call for everyone to recognize in the face of our sick brother the Holy Face of Christ, who, in suffering, dying, and rising again, carried out the salvation of humanity" (Letter Instituting the World Day of the Sick, May 13, 1992, no. 3).



The Day seeks, moreover, to involve all men of good will. Indeed, the basic questions posed by the reality of suffering and the appeal to bring both physical and spiritual relief to the sick do not concern believers alone, but in to all mankind, marked by the limits of the mortal condition.

Unfortunately, we are preparing to celebrate this first World Day in circumstances which are in some respects dramatic: the events of these months, while bringing out the urgency of prayer to entreat divine aid, recall us to the duty of implementing new and swift measures to assist those who suffer and cannot wait.

5

Before the eyes of all are the very sad images of individuals and whole peoples who, lacerated by wars and conflicts, succumb under the weight of easily avoidable calamities.

How can we turn our gaze from the imploring faces of so many human beings, especially children, reduced to a shell of their former selves by the hardships of every kind in which they are caught up against their will because of egoism and violence? And how can we forget all those who at health care facilities - hospitals, clinics, leprosariums, centers of the disabled, nursing homes - or in their own dwellings undergo the calvary of sufferings which are often neglected, not always suitably relieved, and sometimes even aggravated by a lack of adequate support ?



Illness, which in everyday experience is perceived as a frustration of the natural life force, for believers becomes an appeal to “read” the new, difficult situation in the perspective

NEWSLETTER

which is proper to faith. Outside of faith, moreover, how can we discover in the moment of trial the constructive contribution of pain ? How can we give meaning and value to the anguish, unease, and physical and psychic maladies accompanying our mortal condition? What justification can we find for the decline of old age and the final goal of death, which, in spite of all scientific and technological progress, inexorably remain?

Yes, only in Christ, the incarnate Word, redeemer of man and victor over death, is it possible to find the satisfactory answer to such fundamental questions.

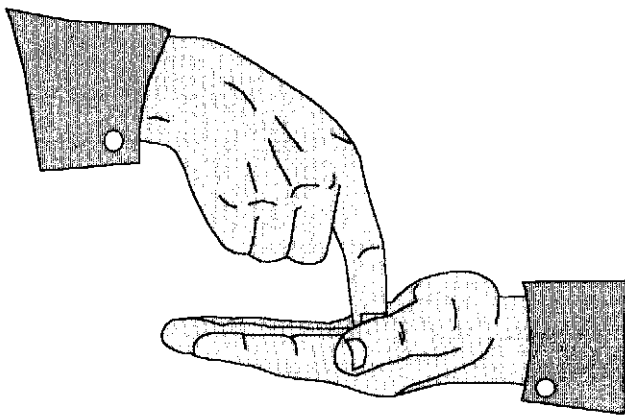
In the light of Christ’s death and resurrection, illness no longer appears as an exclusively negative event-rather, it is seen as a “visit by God”, an opportunity “ to release love, to make works of love towards one’s neighbor arise, to transform all human civilization into the civilization of love” (Apostolic Letter *Salvifici Doloris*, 30).

The history of the Church and of Christian spirituality offers very broad testimony of this. Over the centuries shining pages have been written of heroism in suffering accepted and offered in union with Christ. And no less marvelous pages have been traced out through humble service to the poor and the sick, in whose tormented flesh the presence of the poor, crucified Christ has been recognized.

The World Day of the Sick - in its preparation, realization, and objectives - is not meant to be reduced to a mere external display centering on certain initiatives, however praiseworthy they may be, but is intended to reach consciences to make them aware of the valuable contribution which human and Christian service to those suffering makes to better understanding among men and, consequently, to building real peace.

Indeed, peace presupposes, as its preliminary condition, that special attention be reserved for the suffering and the sick by public authorities, national and international organizations, and every person of good will. This is valid, first of all, for developing countries - in Latin America, Africa, and Asia - which are marked by serious deficiencies in health care. With the celebration of the world Day of the Sick, the Church is promoting a renewed commitment to those populations, seeking to cancel out the injustice existing today by devoting greater human, spiritual, and material resources to their needs.

In this regard, I wish to address a special appeal to civil authorities, to men of science, and to all those who work in direct contact with the sick. may their service never become bureaucratic and aloof! particularly, may it be quite clear to all that the administration of public money imposes the serious duty of avoiding its waste and improper use so that available resources, administered wisely and equitably, will serve to ensure prevention of disease and care during illness for all who need them.



The hopes which are so alive today for a humanization of medicine and health care require a more decisive response. To make health care more humane and adequate it is, however, essential to draw on a transcendent

NEWSLETTER

vision of man which stresses the value and sacredness of life in the sick person as the image of the Son of God. Illness and pain affect every human being: love for the suffering is the sign and measure of the degree of civilization and progress of a people.

To you, dear sick people all over the world, the main actors of this World Day, may this event bring the announcement of the living and comforting presence of the Lord. Your sufferings, accepted and borne with unshakable faith, when joined to those of Christ, take on extraordinary value for the life of the Church and the good of humanity.

TESTIMONY

For you, health workers, called to the highest, most meritorious and exemplary testimony of justice and love, may this Day be a renewed spur to continue in your delicate service with generous openness to the profound values of the person, to respect for human dignity, and to defense of life, from its beginning to its natural close.

For you, Pastors of the Christian people, and to all the different members of the Church community, for volunteers, and particularly for those engaged in the health care ministry, may this World Day of the Sick offer stimulus and encouragement to go forward with fresh dedication on the way of service to tired, suffering man.

On the commemoration of Our Lady of Lourdes, whose sanctuary at the foot of the Pyrenees has become a temple of human suffering, we approach - as She did on Calvary, where the cross of her Son rose up - the crosses of pain and solitude of so many brothers and sisters to bring them comfort, to share their suffering and present it to the Lord of life, in spiritual communion with the whole Church.

SUFFERING

May the Blessed Virgin, "Health of the Sick" and "Mother of the Living", be our support and our hope and through, the celebration of the Day of the Sick, increase our sensitivity and dedication to those being tested, along with the trusting expectation of the luminous day of our salvation, when every tear will be dried forever (cf. Is 25:8). May it be granted to us to enjoy the first fruits of that day from now on in the superabundant joy - though in the midst of all tribulation (cf. 2 Co 7:4) - promised by Christ which no one can take from us (Jn 16:22).



NEWSLETTER

Spiritual Refreshment

謝主曲

我們每個人都受召,以聖神這顆細小的子,去生長、滋養和治療。這是我們的責任;走向每一個人。果實不是給我們作享受,使我們豐盈,而是給天主子民。我們必須慢慢發現,這力量賦予我們,但不是我們的;那是聖神,是耶穌生活在我們之內。

受召行善的,不是我們而是在我們內的天主聖神。他住在我們內,像住在宮殿內一樣,從我們內心流出來,以便喚醒在其他人內心的神,使他們也可意識到他們的殿宇之美,使他們發現,在種種怨恨、絕望底下,是天主的臨在,在他們之內生活和等待被喚醒。迎接耶穌的聖神,進入我們的存有,這是我們無可推卸的責任,正如瑪利亞迎接他身體的臨在,到自己腹中,肩負她的責任一樣。

意識到自己就是聖神的宮殿後,第一件事就是感恩,像瑪利亞一樣,她唱了她的謝主曲:

我的靈魂頌揚上主(路 1:46-49)

8
The Editorial Board

NEWSLETTER

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Dr. C W Lam Linda

Dr. S M Lo Simon

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