

~~Trappist~~ Raymond, Father, 1903
Help God be a success
ADX 4623

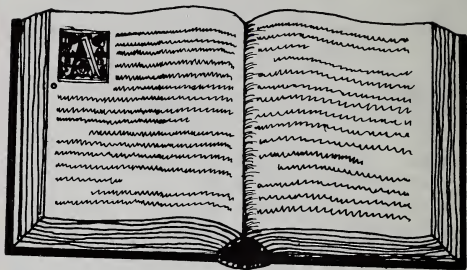
A Trappist

Begs

The Medical Profession:

**HELP
GOD
BE
A
SUCCESS**

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Begs

The Medical Profession:

HELP

GOD

BE

A

SUCCESS

To
DR. ROGER C. GRAVES
and
DR. CHARLES J. E. KICKHAM
of
Boston, Massachusetts
in
Grateful appreciation
of
Their unstinting generosity
in
HELPING
GOD
BE A SUCCESS

NEWS

Germ and the body interest doctors. This then, will fascinate them; for it concerns a germ never mentioned in Bacteriology and bodily members never described in Anatomy. Yet this is the germ that makes the medical profession eminent, and these the bodily members that make it sublime.

Before going into details let me say that Standard Dictionaries err. They imply that quackery is limited entirely to the medical profession. That is not true. There are quacks in every profession; even in mine. These last, in their feverish anxiety to keep first things first, have come to forget that without a second there is no first. They insist that God be praised—which is proper insistence—but they have forgotten that one very fine way of praising God is to praise man. They should recall that it was Christ who said: “And the *second* is like to this . . .” Unquestionably, we do not praise enough—either God or men. To right that wrong in some degree, both are praised in this pamphlet to the medical profession.

With extreme grace a courtier once said: “Madame, when I met your daughter, I grew envious of her mother; since meeting you, it is the daughter I envy.” Which, you must admit, is paying compliment par excellence—by indirection. You may suspect that I have stolen a page from his book when, instead of members of the medical profession, I praise their patients. But be undeceived. My style smacks more of the ill-mannered Leon Bloy than of the gallant courtier.

I can well imagine that burningly sincere Frenchman blurting out: "You medical people don't know what you are, because you don't know on what you work. Your knowledge is great, but your ignorance of the important knowledge is greater. You think it is modern invention, modern discovery and the lightning progress of the medical science in modern times that make you great. That is stupidity. It is not modernity at all that gives you transcendancy; it is antiquity. Your profession is significant not because of the discovery of the Twentieth Century, but because of a discovery of the First! What Gabriel found at Nazareth, what shepherds found in a manger, and what Magi found in a crib makes you great. Yours is a truly sublime profession precisely because humanity has ceased to be simply human since God became a Boy."

Resent that fiery address; look on it as an impudent attack, and you are repudiating incense that is being burned before you! For in all truth it is your patients more than your proficiency that give you your pre-eminence. Without broken bits of humanity to call forth your skill, you doctors could be savants but you never could be Good Samaritans. If nurses were to remain "on call" all the time and never go "on duty", they might be marvels of intelligence, they would never become miracles of mercy. You medical people are great because there is a germ in every human that Pathology knows nothing of, and because you work on members Anatomy never mentions. To appreciate what you are

STARE AT YOUR PROFESSION

The only way to see a familiar thing, says Chesterton, is to stare at it until it begins to

look strange. That advice is sound. Take it. Stare at your profession until its brilliance all but blinds you!

As he was coming out of ether one day a young cleric looked into the eyes of the doctor standing over him and said: "After mine, yours is the most sacred profession. I treat souls. You treat the soul's covering." He was not wrong. Nor was Father John Bonn, S.J., when in his book *SO FALLS THE ELM TREE* he wrote of doctors "administering the 'sacrament' of healing". Indeed there is something very sacred about the medical profession; but it is seen only when you stare at your patients long enough to see that they are more than human—at least potentially.

Don't let that last phrase upset you. It is literally true because of the germ you never studied and the Anatomy you never learned. But let me say here what Leon Bloy would say were he writing this booklet; and let me say it as he would: Any doctor who puts stethoscope to human breast and does not hear the beat of Divinity needs to have more than his ears blown out—his brains are not functioning properly! Any nurse who takes a pulse and does not feel the throb of the Infinite Three in One should doff her uniform, re-enter the primary grades and learn to count. That is how near man is to God and how sacredly sublime is the medical profession.

What has long bewildered me is the myopia of far-seeing medical men. How blind they must be to miss the truth that to disparage man is to disparage the entire medical profession from senior surgeon to latest probationer! These men may be smart; they most certainly are not wise. Their every unscientific pronouncement is a boomerang that comes

back with devastating force on the very science they attempt to represent. Say man has no immortal soul; say he is not close kin to God; say that he is nothing more than mere pulsing clay; and look what you have said about your own profession! You have made the greatest surgeon little more than a veterinary, and the vocation to nursing nothing more than a call to care for ailing animals! Say that man is only a higher anthropoid and you are implicitly saying that doctors and nurses belong to the Animal Rescue League. Instead of "M.D." and "R.N." after their names they should write "S.P.C.A." for if man is only an evolved ape the medical profession is nothing more than a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

That may sound flippant; but stare at it until you see that it is sublimated truth.

Doctor J. Walsh has questioned the factuality (please allow the word) of the oft repeated anecdote concerning the great physician and the humble nun. In his slurringly skeptical way the great physician claimed to have cut into every part of the human body without once coming across the thing called the human soul. She quietly asked him if he had ever come across the thing called pain. Let the incident be purely fictitious, the devastating force of the argument remains. Its point is sharp as steel and punctures that foolish fallacy properly. There are realities no scalpel will ever touch. One such is the human soul. Because of it human bodies are precious and the medical profession sublime.

That is a truth that has to be labored and belabored; for preoccupation with man's body has too often led to a forgetfulness of man's soul.

Why do the Latins say: "*Ubi tres medici, ibi duo athei?*" Can the preoccupation I speak of be the cause? But that is to be most illogical. That saying puzzles me. It seems incredible that of three intelligent doctors two can be so unintelligent as to be atheists. If medical men are scientific at all; if they go from effect to cause; if they have learned to think things through; they can never separate worship from their work; for no one comes in more constant or closer contact with the Divinity than those who work on sick and suffering humanity.

Frank Sheed, president of the Sheed and Ward Publishing Company, has well said: "A child born into the world is as much a proof of the Omnipotence of God as a dead man raised to life." Think that through and you will see that he is most right; and you will see how constantly close you are to Omnipotence! Gilbert K. Chesterton claimed that if only one babe were born on this planet of ours we would all rush to adore it. He was not wrong. Do you ever think this way when you are "on Maternity"?

"Life only from the living," is a principle none of you will question. Spontaneous generation is a myth; and an exploded one. It follows then, that *being* can come only from "He who *is*;" and only One has ever said: "Yahwe"—I am who am. We call Him—God!

Taken on their own principle, then, members of the medical profession cannot be atheistic. Taken from their own practices, they have to stultify themselves to be such. Take but one example. Genealogy is of great interest to you medical people, isn't it? You are all more than curious about that hormone which transmits characteristics from parent to

offspring, aren't you? Such curiosity is commendable; for more than looks come to us from our fathers and mothers at birth. But think the thing through! Trace the lineage of any one of your patients all the way back and what do you find? You find that his or her ultimate Ancestor is—God! Adam and Eve were our First Parents, it is true; but Adam and Eve were not uncaused! They came from the hand of Jehovah. So heredity inevitably leads you to the Creator. Doesn't that fact speak to you? Doesn't it say that the light in every human eye was kindled by the Infinite? Don't you see that we humans are but Eternal Fire-flies flashing in the dark of Time. Or better, we are but broken lights of the Light of the World. Your profession is man's effort to shield those lights from the wind.

Yes, doctors and nurses are in the employ of Divinity even though their one work seems to be with humanity—a truth blustering (I almost wrote “bluffing”) atheistic doctors admit by their actions. And actions always speak louder than words! A horse and his rider were seriously hurt. A would-be-atheistic doctor hurried through the crowd. Without hesitation he said: “Put the horse out of his misery. Hurry the man to a hospital”. Why did he say that? The man's chances for life seemed less than the horse's. If he did survive he would be more useless in a material way than would be a legless horse! Yet the doctor tried to save him. Why? Why would all medical men do the same? To speak of the “brotherhood of man” is to cede the case; for men are not brothers unless they have a common parent. “The brotherhood of man” bespeaks “the Fatherhood of God” or it says nothing! To say that they want to save the

man because he has a soul, is another forfeiting of the argument; for they cannot mean a material soul since the horse has that. They can only mean an *immortal* soul, and immortality comes only from Him who lives forever—God!

Philosophy has well said that no thinking man can be a *speculative* atheist, that is, one who holds as certain the assertion: "There is no God." How can Philosophy be so apodictic? Simply because to think is to be a theist.

Any man, woman or child who admits that where there is smoke there is fire, must admit there is a God. Yes, Philosophy can afford to be apodictic; for since effects demand causes, no thinking man can deny the existence of the First Cause—God.

Theology, of course, is more fearless, forthright, and final. She calmly quotes Scripture. She says: "The *fool* has said in his heart, there is no God" (Ps. 13, 1)—only the fool! Doctors and nurses are not fools.

Pity is all we can have for those who consider themselves *speculative* atheists. Their minds are not normal. For the *practical* atheists—those people who *live* as if there were no God—we can only pray. Their lives are not normal!

Change that Latin proverb from: "*Ubi tres medici, ibi duo athei,*" to "*Ubi tres medici, ibi tres mystici;*" for the only true realism in the world is practical mysticism! You medical men are most practical. Be true realists. Be such by

TAKING CHRIST AT HIS WORD

A Society leader, whose thirst for thrills had taken her to a hospital, was watching a nun dress a particularly repulsive wound

which emitted a very offensive odor. When the nun finished, the Society leader tossed her head disdainfully and started for the door with the words: "I wouldn't do that for a million dollars."

She was stopped in her stride, however, by the soft and surprising reply from the nun: "Neither would I. Nor for two million."

"Then why...?" gasped the haughty one.

The nun smiled. "I don't suppose you ever heard of the Mystical Body," she said, "but perhaps you have read of the Good Samaritan."

The Society leader looked blank. The nun led her down the corridor saying: "God loves that person; loves her intensely. So much so that He has incorporated her in His Christ. In working on her, I am working on Him."

Of course the curious one did not understand. The nun was talking so much Greek to her. But medical men and women must understand that language else they will never appreciate their profession.

Do you realize that Jesus Christ has thrown down the gauntlet to you? Well, He has! He has challenged you to develop X-ray eyes; eyes that will pierce appearances and see below the surface. He has issued, as it were, a divine defy, calling on you to see what the nun above saw. And what was that?—Christ in every patient! He is there, at least potentially because of the *Christ-germ* your Bacteriology never told you about and because of the potentiality latent in every human of being a *mystical member* of the Body your Anatomy never speaks of. Christ challenges you to find that germ and to develop that member. Elevate your profession from that of merely

working for a wage to that of working out the divine wager. Be big enough and brave enough and bold enough to take Christ at His word. "As long as you did it to one of these, the least of my brethren," says Jesus, "you did it unto ME!" (Mt. 25, 40). Indeed that is throwing down the gauntlet. Take it up! Others before you have done it—and won!

What do you think Damien and Dutton were doing on Molokai? Do you think some sentimental twaddle about the "brotherhood of man" "the outcasts of society" or all being one "under the skin" kept these men on that pest spot? Do you think these two giants of generosity gave their lives merely to minister to leprous man? Never! The truth is they had taken Christ at His word. They believed that He meant what He said when He said: "*You do it unto ME.*" They snatched up the gauntlet. They did for nothing what few men would do for a million or even two million dollars. For it we do not name them "men," we call them SAINTS! They had vision. They had lost mere sight. They knew that in caring for outcasts they were caring for Christ. When dying, Dutton could gasp: "I love them," and have it mean: "I love Jesus Christ!"

There are hundreds of Damiens and Duttons today. And wonder of wonders, not all of them are men! They have stared until they saw. In every bit of humanity, broken, bent or hideously marred, they see at least the chrysalis of a Christ-member. They have learned of the germ Pathology knows not—the Christ-germ seated in every son of Adam and every daughter of Eve. They have done what every member of the medical profession should do. They have taken Christ at His word. They firmly believe that to be a doctor

or a nurse is more than to double for the Divine Physician; it is to "go about doing good," to go about being "the Good Samaritan," to go about caring for Christ really present in His mystical members!

I suppose a deeply meditative surgeon must stare at his sensitive fingers and strong, capable hands, then sigh as he thinks of the consecrated hands and the anointed fingers of the priest. He handles God daily. How the surgeon envies him! But no! He should rather realize that there is another "real presence" besides that in the Host. He and his fellow surgeons may not hold the Physical Body of Jesus in their hands of flesh, but they can and they do handle parts of His Mystical Body! Christ is present in the Mass one way; in the masses He is present in another. But He is the same Christ, else He would never have sundered the Heavens years after He had taken His Physical Body there and asked Saul of Tarsus: "*Why persecutest thou ME?*" If Christ be not *really* present in His Mystical members then that cry is a deceit. Saul was striking Christians; it was the Christ who called out!

That has always appealed to me as the most positive and practical proof of our oneness with Christ that can be offered. For everyone is conscious of the unity of his own physical make-up and the identity of his person with that make-up. Thus if I twist my ankle it will not be my foot that will cry out; it will be I! For it is I who have been hurt in my member. If you should cut your little finger, the digit will not complain; *you* will! For you and your finger are one. Thus we see that Saul on the road to Damascus seeking Christians was really seeking Christ. That

is why I cry out: Members of the medical profession, supernaturalize the natural! Grow conscious of the "Christ-germ" that is in every human soul and of the Mystical Body that wants all for its members! In short...

BE MODERN!

Now please understand me. When I beg you to grow mystical I am not pleading with you to become impractical. Far from it! I have already said that the only absolute realist is the mystic. I meant that. I go further now and say that he is the only truly practical man. He doesn't despise money. No. He will tell you that you must make it; for without it in our economic era, you cannot live. But in the same breath he will insist that while making money, you are to mint merit; for without that you will die eternally. Indeed he is a most practical man. He will tell you that your income should be enough to buy a home for yourself on earth. But at the same time he will insist that your output be enough to build a mansion for yourself in Heaven. If you ask him to be more concrete, he will bluntly reply: "Work on humanity as mere human persons and you are really wasting your time. Work on humanity as mystical members of a Divine Person and you are insuring your Eternity!"

Unquestionably, the temptation at this juncture will be to shout: "I work on bodies, not on souls. My profession demands that I deal with the material, not with the mystical." Conquer that temptation! Conquer it completely, else you date yourself; and the date will not be of the Twentieth Century! If you will be modern you must be mystical; for the modern man is ever seeking the *deeper* reality.

Then again, you do NOT work on bodies as bodies. Undertakers do that. You do not deal with the material as material. Geologists and a few other Scientists do that. You may work on Mrs. Smith's appendix or on Mr. Brown's kidney; but you never send your bill to the kidney or the appendix. You send it to the person! And whatever it is, personality has never been weighed, measured, or X-rayed. You work on persons, and human persons are actually, or at least potentially, mystical members of the Divinity's Second Person.

Don't shy at this doctrine or you shy at a truth that makes your profession a romance, your life a lyric, and your death a visit to the Patient you have treated. Don't grow affrighted. This doctrine is not nearly so difficult to master as was Anatomy. To grasp its essentials demands little more intelligence than is required to take a temperature. If you can read a clinical thermometer and take a human's pulse, you can understand this astounding truth. If you say: "I believe in God," honestly, you implicitly say: "I believe in the doctrine of the Mystical Body"; "I believe that every human being is a mystical member of the son of God, either actually or potentially"; "I believe that in working on people I am working on the Mystical Christ." For this truth comes not from man, but from the God in whom you believe.

It is a mystery, of course. But that shouldn't bother any thinking mortal; for in mystery we can be said to live and move and have our being. Surely, doctors and nurses know that! But mystery is not muddle. Else we would all be muddled. Mystery is a stimulant to the mind, not an anesthetic. And there is none

more stimulating than the mystery of our incorporation in Christ Jesus. How simple He has made it! He knew what was in man; so when He wanted to reveal a truth that would make life one great adventure, He did not let fall conundrums that would perplex genius. Never! He gave the sublime truth in language that would not confuse the simple-minded. Listen to the Word, and you will learn the thrilling truth that we are all but broken syllables of that Word! You have given years to the study of man's physical body; give a few moments now to the study of God's Mystical Body. You will find that it pays greater dividends in time and for Eternity.

Husbandmen cannot fail to catch Christ's meaning when He says: "I am the vine; you, the branches" (John 15, 5). They immediately see that Christ and Christian are one; that it is Christ who gives life to Christians, and that only by staying as closely united to Christ as branches are to the vine can Christians ever grow and bear fruit. The truth is as open as the sky and just as discernible.

Builders learn this same sublime truth when St. Peter speaks of the baptized Catholics being *living stones in the temple*—Christ (1 Peter 2, 5). They, too, see that Christ and Christian are one, that multiplicity is reduced to unity and solidarity in, through, and with Christ Jesus. The lesson is taught clearly.

But no one should have a clearer understanding of this same truth than members of the medical profession; for, through St. Paul, God teaches this sublime doctrine with an insistence on one figure that almost grows monotonous. Again, again, and again the Apostle tells of the union and the unity of members with members, and of all members with

Head. "You are the Body of Christ," says this converted zealot, "and members of members" (1 Cor. 12, 27). Just as hands, feet, arms, legs, heart, lungs, liver with all the other members make up the one human body of man, so do all loyal, baptized Catholics make up the one Mystical Body of Christ. As my hand is part of me, so the Catholic is a mystical part of the God-Man. Can anyone fail to understand that?

Do you see now why I have been insisting on the recognition of the true dignity of man? It is the only way your profession can be seen in all its towering grandeur. It is not knowledge in the mind that makes you great; it is knowledge of the man!

Do be modern! Realize that the word of a woman changed the whole history of mankind. The day the Maid of Nazareth said: "*Ecce ancilla,*" was the day the course of the human race swerved. From "a caravan on its way to death," Mary's "*Fiat*" made it possible for it to be the Mystical Christ on His way to Resurrection. For her reply to Gabriel brought the Divine Physician to a palsied, paralytic, deaf, dumb, blind, sick and dying world. He performed one Major Operation. He outdid the Good Samaritan. Instead of pouring oil and wine into our wounds, He poured His Blood into our veins. Instead of putting us on his beast and taking us to an inn, He took us in! and made us members of His Body. His one Major Operation was a *Blood Transfusion!* And, thanks be to God, it is still going on. You members of the medical profession are assisting at it. So

BE PROFESSIONAL

It has both amused and inspired me to hear

some young probationer say to her classmate: "Don't do that. It's unprofessional." She may yet be still "on trays" but already she has caught something nurses never lose—professional dignity. It seems to be assumed with the very uniform.

But how often have you heard Catholic nurses say to their classmates: "Don't do that. It's uncatholic." How often? Yet a greater dignity was acquired with the Baptismal robe than can ever be acquired by the donning on any other uniform. Catholic nurses should realize that they were registered Catholics long before they became registered nurses. And Catholic doctors should remember that they could write "M.C." after their name long before they could write "M.D." For they were "Members of Christ" before they became members of the medical profession. So I say to you members of the medical profession what no classmate has ever said. I say: "Don't be unprofessional Christians!" You won't be if you realize what you are and where you are.

I remember a senior surgeon looking up to a young interne at the close of a very fascinating operation and saying: "Doctor, where would you rather be: in the Operating Room or in the Kingdom of Heaven?" Perhaps it was flattery; perhaps it was the enthusiasm of youth; at any rate the youngster answered: "I think I'd prefer the 'O.R.'"

The answer has point. I understood it then. I expect you to understand it now. Of course it manifests a colossal ignorance of the Kingdom of Heaven. But ignorance is not always an evil thing. It is ignorance that makes operations so fascinating, not knowledge. If we knew exactly what we were going to find

every time we used the knife, we could do away with galleries in our surgeries. But the particular point I make here is that *we are all in the "O.R."* And our entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven depends on our conduct in the "O.R."

The truth is that the Divine Physician is still performing His Blood Transfusion. We are His assistants. He has not opened a vein; He has opened a ventricle! He has loosed the life-blood of His Heart. It is flowing to mankind through seven different arteries! You must

HELP GOD BE A SUCCESS

That title jolts, doesn't it? Immediately you think of the Self-sufficiency of God, of His Omnipotence, of His utter and absolute Independence. How can a finite mortal like yourself, who knows ever so much more about failure than about triumph, help the Infinite God be a success, you ask. It is absurd. But no. Be not so hasty. It sounds different, it is true. But it is the soundest of sound theology. You simply **MUST** help God, else He will not know the success He desires.

The reaction set up by the first presentation of this truth was amusing. It happened to be Palm Sunday. The Gospel of the day furnished the text for the talk. I said: "*Dominus opus habet*—The Lord hath need..." (Mt. 21,3). The argument ran that just as God had need of "an ass and a colt" to fulfill a prophecy that day (the day of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem) so He "hath need" of Catholics today if He is to fulfill a prophecy about Himself. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself" (John 12,32).

After the talk a sincere soul approached and very earnestly asked: "Father, do you mean to say God Almighty NEEDS you and me?"

I smiled. "Yes," I said, "Almighty God really *needs* you and me. Just as He *needed* an ass and a colt. Wonderful, isn't it? You be the colt. I'll fill the other role."

His face clouded. "I'm serious, Father."

"So am I," said I with a chuckle. "But there is nothing wrong, as Chesterton said, with putting a plain truth pleasantly."

"But is it the *plain* truth?"

"So plain that it is almost homely."

"But Father, you exalt man so much. How about humility? How about Pelagianism?"

I knew then what I had met— a "humble" soul; a person brought up on the "nothingness" of the creature; a man who had convinced himself that he was nothing, could do nothing, could be nothing. I had met them before. I never enjoyed the meeting. "Pelagianism," I mused aloud, "was condemned fifteen hundred years ago. That did not teach God needed us. That taught we didn't need God." The point did not register. Time was pressing so I said: "It is absolutely true, my friend, that without God we can do nothing in the supernatural line." His face brightened visibly. "But it is equally true that, in His ordinary Providence, God can do nothing without us." The light vanished from his face. "We are small creatures. Very small. Infinitesimal quite accurately describes us. But remember that the spark that sets the motor running is not very large. Without it the motor will not run, will it?" He shook his head. "God's grace is the perfect engine,"

I concluded, "it has oil, gas and complete running parts. We are the spark."

"You really mean that we can actually help God?" was the incredulous rejoinder.

"I mean that without us God will not be a success."

His eyes almost popped out of his head. "Oh, Father..." he gasped, "humility..."

"Humbug!" I snapped not too kindly. "Humility is truth. Face it. God has ordained that salvation be a co-operative affair. Do you see? Not God alone. Not man alone. But God and man."

"But the *nothingness* of the creature..."

I'm afraid that at this point the spark I mentioned above exploded the vaporized gas. "Come, man, give God some credit," I said. "Did He create 'nothings'? If He did, what kind of a creation would it have been? And give Christ some credit. Did He become a 'nothing'? He became man, you know! He became a creature. Do you think Jesus Christ died for 'nothings'? Of course not! He died for creatures—His own rational creatures. If you want to make Infinite Wisdom appear witless, go on talking about the 'nothingness of creatures'! Wake up to reality! To keep the Death of Jesus Christ from being Love's labor lost God needs you and me. Do you understand?"

"But doesn't that smack of Semipelagianism?"

"Yes, *Catholic* Semipelagianism. Live it and you'll be a saint. Live it and God will be a success," were my final words. He left then, utterly unconvinced. As he walked away I suspect that he was secretly muttering to

himself something about: "I am nothing. I can do nothing. I can be nothing."

I felt pity for that person. I saw that he was earnest, sincere, but ill-instructed. I thought of a number of very convincing things to say—*after* he had left. It is ever thus! I was very sorry that I had not said that since creation is "the production of something out of nothing by God," it is as true to insist that we come from the Infinite God as it is to insist that we come from nothing—and it is much more inspiring! The only trouble with these after-thoughts is that they do come *after*.

However, it was a consolation to receive a copy of Pius XII's latest Encyclical "*Mystici Corporis*" from this same "humble" soul with the notation: "Confer page 27. God did (and does) need 'an ass and a colt.' I was a donkey the day we met." I turned to page twenty-seven and read the underscored section. It ran:

"What Paul said of the human organism is to be applied likewise to this Mystical Body: "The head cannot say to the feet: "I have no need of you." It is manifestly clear that the faithful need the help of the Divine Redeemer...yet this, too, must be held, marvelous though it appear, *Christ requires His members...*"

I jumped as I read the words. The last phrase sounded just like an echo of the text and the thought I had used and developed that day. "*Dominus opus habet*—the Lord hath need" Then my eyes raced on to:

"...in carrying out the work of Redemption He wishes to be *helped* by the *members of His Body*."

I sat back aghast at the honesty of a soul I had pitied. Truly, the man *was* humble! Then I marveled at God's strange ways. You see, at times preachers get 'blue.' They think that their words are like the poet Gray's flowers. Not "born to blush unseen" exactly, but to "waste their sweetness on the desert air." But here was confirmation of the opposite in a coincidence that astounded. On that Palm Sunday I had said: "My head hath need of my heart if I am to love. And God hath need of you if He is to succeed." Here was the Pope with a sentence convincing a soul I had failed to convince with a sermon! But I thanked God the soul was convinced, for I knew life would be a lot different for that person from that day out. The sun shines a great deal brighter when I tell myself that I am helping God be a success than it does when I hang my head and go about saying: "I am nothing. I can do nothing. I can be nothing." It takes tremendous courage to be truly humble! That soul had received the grace. I want you members of the medical profession to receive the same.

It is true! It is thrillingly true that God hath need of *you!* Without you His Major Operation will not be the success He desires. Doesn't that make life look different? I know that there are moments, yes, and even hours and days when life seems worse than meaningless; it seems a misery. Realization is always so far below expectation. Our deepest desires never know satisfaction. In our greatest works there is always a defective fumbling. We ask is the game worth the candle? Is the end worth the effort? Is life more than emptiness? The honest answer is: "No!" until we realize just what life is. Once we see that it

is a collaboration with the Divine Physician, then we know its every moment is meaningful. To realize that God Almighty needs me, needs me so badly that without me He cannot achieve the success He desires, stirs the uttermost depths of my being. With that truth before me no dawn can be too sudden, and every night comes far too soon. What a romance life is! What an adventure! What a challenge to the best in man and woman! Accept that challenge by

PREVENTING STILL-BIRTHS

There has been altogether too much talk about "birth-prevention." (Please always call it that! For it is *not* birth-control. Unless, of course, words have so lost their meanings that the best way for us to *control* our breathing is to *block* our windpipes!) As I was saying: There has been altogether too much talk about "birth prevention" and not near enough about the prevention of still-births. This kind of prevention gives life; the other kind can only bring death to the family, the state and the nation!

Even the most materialistic nationalist is now crying down birth-prevention lest the land grow desolate. Atheistic Russia, pagan Nazi-land, Masonic France have learned their lessons. But why do they want to prevent physical still-births and put an end to birth-prevention? Only to darken the skies with paratroopers, dive bombers and flying fortresses filled with men who deal only in death, destruction, and consequent heart-break. You can brighten the skies with spotless souls. You can fill Heaven with happiness. You can thrill the very Heart of God. You can do it by

preventing mystical still-births. Miss not your opportunity!

Years ago on the Pacific Slope I met a girl who had far out-Magdalened Magdalene before the latter had ever known Christ. There was hardly a large city west of the Mississippi in which she had not sinned, and sinned heinously. As she went on with her sordid story I was marveling at God's inexhaustible mercy and wondering whose prayers had won the grace of repentance for this fortunate vagabond.

Of course God's ways are unfathomable; yet it seems quite certain that there is a "quid pro quo" in the workings of His grace. The hearts of Poor Clares and Discalced Carmelites throbbing away their lifebeats behind grate and grille, aching for God and breaking for man, have bent the knees of more than one wanton and set them weeping at the feet of Christ. Margaret Mary was a missioner, as everyone now knows; and the Little Flower's fragrance sweetened the world even more than it did Lisieux! These truths flashed through my mind as this Twentieth Century Magdalene spilled out the precious spikenard of her penitential love, giving Christ another opportunity to teach some Pharisaical Simon a salutary lesson. But their flashings stopped as she said: "Father, there is only one good thing that I can remember to have done in all my life. I baptized a dying infant. I was a nurse at the time. The doctor on the case was not a religious person. While he busied himself with the mother, I took the dying child, poured a little water on her head, baptizing her in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. I named her 'Mary.'"

I knew then that I did not have to search the cloisters of earth to find the one who had won this sinner back to life. I felt certain that the cause of her resurrection was to be found in the nurseries of Heaven! She had once "prevented a still-birth"; she was now being rescued from a living death.

You see now what my title means. I am talking about mystical still-births; for those are the only kind you can prevent. Physical still-births are God's province.

Now let us talk plain facts. You medical people know many moments of poignancy and pain in your profession. Diagnosing is always difficult. It can often be humiliatingly disappointing. An unsuccessful operation brings chagrin. The unresponsiveness of some patients to all treatment puzzles. An unexpected death will leave one standing aghast. Yes, you know much pain and poignancy. But never more than at the moment of a still-birth. That knifes to the very heart. The awful stillness of the baby-form pierces the soul. Wouldn't you gladly give half your blood if by so doing you could put pulse into the heart of that babe? Would you not willingly go dumb for years if by so doing you could put a cry on those baby-lips? Doesn't your whole being ache for the poor mother who knows such a frustration? Nine months of high hopes crash in a moment. And there is nothing you can do to rebuild them. You are as helpless as the still-born babe; for God alone is absolute Master of physical life. But Doctor! and Nurse! He is not so of mystical life! No, He depends on you! You can't prevent physical still-births, but you can prevent mystical still-births with *a little water and a few words!*

Now let us talk plainer facts. If a newborn babe is surely going to die and no priest is near, what is your duty? your privilege? your wondrous opportunity?—It is to give that child life! Eternal life! It matters not what the babe's parents believe or disbelieve. Let the mother be a Mohammedan and the father a Jew; let them be untaught pagans or wrongly taught atheists; it matters not. You can send that child to the arms of its Original Parent—God—*living!* It takes just *a little water and a few words.*

Do you begin to understand? I said that you were assisting at the Blood Transfusion performed by Jesus Christ, didn't I? I told you that from the very ventricle of His Heart that Blood was flowing to mankind through seven arteries. I said that your duty was to see that It kept flowing. Well, this is one of those arteries. This is the life-giving artery of Baptism. You keep His Blood flowing through this artery by *a little water and a few words.* Surely you would not miss such an opportunity to do so much for God and for man with so little, would you?

A few years ago my brother presented me with a niece, making me an uncle for the first time. He named her Sheila-Mae. From all reports she must have been a very winsome child; for everyone who saw her doted on her. Four short years, filled with wonder and joy, fled. Before the fifth had rounded its cycle Sheila-Mae was stricken with leuchemia. You doctors and nurses know what that means better than I. Sheila-Mae was doomed. One specialist wanted to experiment with a bombardment of phosphorus particles. He would promise no more than a slight extension of life even if successful; and most of the con-

sulting physicians questioned the possibility of success. More. He would not perform his experiment unless my brother practically signed away his child. It was a very difficult decision to make. At such moments we are ready to grasp at less than straws. The wan face of his child wherein daily the luminous eyes grew larger haunted the worried lad. Finally, on the advice of a friend of the family, himself a celebrated surgeon, it was decided to bombard Heaven with prayers rather than the child with particles. This bombardment, however, humanly speaking, was not even as successful as the other might have been. With that unbelievable rapidity that so baffles Medical Science, the leucocytes kept on multiplying. Two weeks had not passed before a weary Sheila-Mae had breathed her last baby breath in the arms of my brother.

Looked at with natural eyes that was heart-breakingly tragic for all concerned. But when we use Catholic eyes, when we look at it in the light of Faith, we thrill to the wondrous blessing that child received before life had really slipped its bud. They buried her little whitened body, but her soul shot straight to the arms of God! What a blessing! What an unimaginably tremendous blessing! She is in Heaven, and there she will be *forever!* She knows a happiness now that my brother could never have given her even if he were Croesus and beggared himself in the effort. Yet it *was* he who cooperated to give her the happiness she now knows and will know forever; for he was Catholic enough to prevent her mystical still-birth. He had her baptized. Leucocytes robbed her body of life, but no leucocyte touched her soul; and as long as God is God

Sheila-Mae will know life and love and bliss untold and untellable.

Of course we, whose lives are regulated by the hands of a clock, know nothing of the real meaning of such words as Eternal—Unending—Forever. But perhaps time can give us some little appreciation of the timeless. Two thousand years is a long, long time. But two thousand years have passed since Herod brutally slew the Holy Innocents. Today Sheila-Mae plays on the floor of Heaven with those same Innocents who laugh as they find life in Heaven still *young!* Twenty centuries of time have passed, but Eternity never grows old. No. And when the suns have all burned to cinders and our tired old world has rolled on its side like a spun-out top, life will still be young for Sheila-Mae, the Holy Innocents, and all the inhabitants of Heaven from our First Parents down. When time ends, Eternity will be but beginning; if you will kindly allow so erroneous a word when talking about so timeless a thing. What an opportunity is yours! You can give Eternity to individuals by *a little water and a few words*—by Baptism.

Now let me grow a mite technical and somewhat terse. You are to baptize only when there is danger of death and no priest is handy. You need *water*. Pour it on the head (forehead) of the child, and while pouring say: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." There you have all that is required for a valid and a licit Baptism. The *circumstances*: danger of death. The *matter*: natural water. The form: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

Will you pay close attention to the following? Every miscarriage (i.e., an aborted hu-

man fetus) is to be baptized! Remember that. If it is certainly alive, baptize it absolutely; that means with the form above. If there is a doubt about vitality, baptize it conditionally. Say: "*If thou art living*, I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." Don't deprive any soul of Eternity! Take the fetus, tear open the membrane with thumb and finger, then dip the mass in tepid water while pronouncing the words above. Extract it then and you have done a wondrous thing; you have prevented a mystical still-birth; you have given some soul an eternity of bliss; you have helped the Divine Physician be a success! Realize all that it means. You have prevented Calvary from being a waste of Divine Blood for this one soul, who with God will bless you forever.

Will you doctors and nurses be Catholic enough to instruct all married women in this procedure? Will you teach them that there is no valid reason for saying that a living substance from a maternal womb is not animated by a rational soul; hence, it is to be baptized? Will you remember that even monsters which have no human shape, are to be baptized with the form: "If thou art human, I baptize thee...etc." Will you be wise enough, in cases of doubt as to whether the product of conception is one human being or more than one—as when there are two heads—to baptize one *absolutely*, and the other *conditionally*, saying: "If thou art not yet baptized, I baptize thee in the name of the Father . . . , etc."? Will you be prudent enough if there are two chests and one head, to baptize the head absolutely and *both* chests conditionally?

I said you should pour the water on the

head. But there are some cases when you may, and even must, pour the water on some other part. For instance, there are cases of malpresentation. Suppose a hand, or a leg is put forth, and there is danger of death; what are you to do? Baptize *the part delivered!* If the child is subsequently delivered alive, repeat Baptism saying: "If thou art not yet baptized, I baptize thee . . . , etc." Give everyone to whom God has given some life a chance for Eternal life!

Which brings me to some important matters. There are cases of pregnant women dying. Here you *must* work rapidly and well. If the fetus is extracted and is living, baptize it absolutely. If there is doubt about life, baptize it conditionally, saying: "If thou art living, I baptize thee . . . , etc., If it is not, or cannot be extracted, then it is your business to baptize it *where it is!* You know the methods. If not, learn them. A Caesarean section is sometimes done after the death of the mother. But the time lapse before delivery is so long that, according to most doctors, the chances for a living child are small. Therefore, you must give that child its chance for eternal life at the *earliest* possible moment. The only word of warning I give is this: Baptism on the outer membrane is probably *not* valid, since this is part of the mother's organism. The amniotic membrane may be considered a part of the child, but *rupture* of this membrane is advisable if there is no possibility of a living child by a Caesarean section.

That paragraph is most important for Catholic doctors who work in non-Catholic hospitals.

As you see, your opportunities are many, your obligations grave, for as Cardinal Pole,

back in 1545 said: "We are responsible for the words we ought to have said and did not say; for the things we ought to have done and did not do; for the things we ought to have uprooted and left grow; for the things we ought to have planted and did not plant." Let none of those words be the words of Baptism. To have deprived a soul of Heaven for all eternity is too heavy a responsibility for anyone to carry around. So tear up the pagan notions about birth-prevention so widely sown and so luxuriant in growth in these modern days; root out the practice of abortion so prevalent in our land; and plant the prevention of mystical still-births. Then you will have helped God be a success!

Only last week I heard of a child born without eyes, ears, nose or mouth. I know some doctors would have allowed that child to die on the plea that it would be an idiot, a disgrace to its parents and a burden to society. But such doctors should remember that they are not paid to let human beings die! The child lived five and a half years. On it, the parents *lavished* their love. Today that child is in Heaven! Unquestionably it is winning countless blessings for those generous, heroic, Catholic parents who gave it five and a half years of lavish love. Undoubtedly it will win for them Eternity, just that it might return the love it could not give in time.

In a moment of anger one of the most promising surgeons I ever knew said: "There is not a surgeon in this city who couldn't be prosecuted for murder. I know what I'm talking about, and I'm not excluding even Catholic hospitals." I knew he was angry. I also knew he was very well informed. My heart was heavy; for that happened to be one of

the largest cities in the United States. Now I know that one of the most distressing problems you surgeons face is that of saving the lives of both mother and child in the case of a difficult parturition. There is a deeply personal element in the matter; for it was not long ago that I learned the doctor at my birth looked up and said: "It's either the mother or the child." He was answered with: "Oh, Doctor, save the mother! The five other children need her." He saved the mother. She gave birth to four after me. She was here last week as happy at seventy-three as a bride! Needless to say he saved me.

Well, what is a doctor to do? First of all he is to forget his Medical Textbooks and remember his Moral Theology. He is to remember that murder is murder no matter what high sounding technical term Medicine may give it. Hence, except in cases of legitimate self-defense and Capital punishment, it is *never* allowed directly to kill a human being, no matter where that human being is! Hence, the child in the womb may *never* be killed directly, i.e., with deliberate intent. Feticide is murder! Craniotomy is murder! Direct abortion is murder! You don't want to be a murderer, do you? Then forget your Medical Textbooks and remember your Moral Theology!

Indirect abortion, of course, is a different matter. You know a diseased uterus may be excised if necessary, even though it contain a living, inviable fetus. You know what you are doing in those circumstances. You do not *intend* the death of the fetus at all. You foresee it, it is true; and you permit it; but your *whole intention* is to treat the *diseased woman*. That is not casuistry, as a moment's

reflection will show you; it is sternest common sense. But don't forget to give that child its chance for Heaven! Don't fail God in any circumstance.

FOR ADULTS—THE C. A. B.

Naturally you wonder what I advise about adults. Well, I sum up the whole doctrine in three letters: C-A-B.

C- means *Call a priest*. Oh, that is so essential. For he alone can give Absolution. He alone can administer Extreme Unction. He alone can open these two life-giving arteries and allow Christ's Blood to fill the human soul. His presence then is of paramount importance. Call a priest.

Please remember that we Catholic priests, on the testimony of expert doctors, hold that the soul may still be present for two or even three hours after the patient has apparently died. Hence, in the case of an accident, a stroke, or the like, do your utmost to get a priest up to three hours after the apparent death. The man may still be living! The priest will do all in his power to give him eternal life. If your case has been one of lingering illness, desist not for two hours after the seeming death from your effort to get a priest. He will administer the Sacraments conditionally after that lapse of time.

"But," you say, "what if he be a non-Catholic?"

I'm glad you used that last word. For while there are many non-Catholics, there are not so many *Protestants*. In either case "C" still holds good—Call a priest if you can conveniently do so. Very few non-Catholics will re-

fuse his assistance at the last hour. But if you should meet one who does, then go on to "A."

A- means *Acts*. As you see I am giving you a mnemonic. For I am not anxious that you should remember this; I am working frenziedly so that you *can't forget it!* So after you have Called a priest, or found it impossible to do so, get the patient to make *Acts!*

1) *Act of Faith*. With good Catholics you will have no difficulty. With those at the other end of the line—with pagans, you will have very little difficulty. Work with them until you get them to make a real Act of Faith in a) the existence of God, and b) in the fact that *He rewards and punishes*. Those two may be enough. But to be safe, go on until you get him to accept God's word about the Trinity and the Redemption wrought by Christ. Those are the four essentials that spell safety: God—The Trinity—Christ—The Hereafter. Get them to believe those truths on *the word of God*. It is that element that makes an Act of Faith! You'll be delighted to see how readily they accept those truths at the last hour. It seems as though their minds are especially clarified. They think more clearly than they ever thought before. Of course my explanation is that God is working more energetically to see that His Son's Blood be not poured out in vain. God the Father is most anxious that Christ's Major Operation be a success. St. Paul was not writing idle Rhetoric when he said: God "*wishes all men to be saved.*" (1 Tim. 2,4). So make the Act. Make it short. But make it an Act of Faith. Say:

"I believe, O God, because Thou hast revealed it. I believe Thou art. I be-

lieve Thou art Three in One. I believe in Jesus Christ. I believe in the life to come. And I believe all this just because Thou hast said it."

That will be enough.

2) Next, get an *Act of Contrition*. Make this short, too. Make it sincere. Make it Perfect.

"O God, I am sorry, sincerely sorry for having sinned; simply because by sin I have offended You who art so good and deserving of all my love."

Get that *Act* from everyone—Catholic, Protestant, pagan, Jew!

You see why I insist on it being a *Perfect Contrition*, don't you? That is the only kind that can take away sin by itself!

Now for -B- As you have already guessed, this means *Baptism*. No one can get into Heaven without *Baptism* of some sort, either of water, desire or blood. Christ was too explicit on this to admit of quibble. "Unless one be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven" (John 3,5). "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved," are His exact words (Mark 16,16). Now remember that, while non-Catholic *Baptism* is valid when performed correctly, since we are swinging wide the very gate of Heaven, it is sane to act most cautiously. Therefore, *Baptize conditionally!* Yes, even the adult! He or she will be most willing to do all that God wants done in this last hour. And that is all you need obtain from them: An expression that *they are willing to do all that God wants done*. Once you have obtained that, go ahead without any worry!

There is your C.A.B. for adults:—Call a priest. Make Acts of Faith and Contrition. And, if there is danger of the person dying before the priest arrives, Baptize the individual yourself!

I add one word of warning: Don't make a scene; and don't tire your patient with preaching or proofs. Go about it all quietly. You can even administer the Sacrament with absolutely no show. Just take a sponge, a face cloth or the end of a towel, soak it; then squeeze it out on the forehead in such a way that some water actually *runs* on the forehead, and while it is running say the words: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

I have given you many *conditional* forms in these few pages. If you find them confusing, or difficult to remember, just take this single one for all cases: "*If thou art capable, I baptize thee . . . , etc.*" That is perfectly valid and it covers all contingencies.

C.A.B. for Adults will

KEEP THE BLOOD FLOWING

Never do I read that passage in the Gospel which tells about the Jews beseeching Pilate to have the legs of Jesus and the two crucified with Him broken, that I do not wonder if they would not have frustrated the Redemption in some slight degree had they been successful. As you know, the "*crurifragium*" (the breaking of the legs) was a method of hastening the death of the crucified. Had Jesus not been already dead this operation would have deprived Him of some moments of His Passion, some moments laden with Infinite satisfaction for God the Father and infinite merit

for sinful man. The Gospel tells us that the Jews were unsuccessful, for, although they obtained the necessary permission, "when the soldiers came to Jesus, and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs" (John 18,33).

Another thought has often followed on the above. It is this: Herein lies one of the most potent arguments possible to turn Catholic doctors from *Euthanasia*. Isn't that a delightfully sweet sounding synonym for murder? Understand now that I am talking about the administration of drugs that will directly *shorten life*. Unqualifiedly I label it murder! I admit that it is not as crude nor as brutal as slashing a man's throat or blowing his head off with a sawed-off shotgun. Nevertheless, it is taking his life. To say that it is only "shortening it," only "accelerating" a death that is certain and painful, is no defense. After all a gun-man only "shortens" his victim's life; he only "accelerates" a death that is certain, and most probably will be painful. No, there is no dodging the fact: *Euthanasia* which shortens life is murder. Think deeply, Doctor. Think correctly, Nurse. Allow not the heart to dictate to the head. Let not a false sympathy and an unethical science lead you to mar the Passion of the Mystical Christ! Be neither like the Jews nor the Roman soldiery. Let Jesus, in His mystical members, satisfy fully and merit super-abundantly. Keep the Blood flowing!

Do I mean to insinuate that you may not dull pain in those last moments? Not at all. But you know, and I know, that it is possible to dull pain without destroying consciousness. If the patient has not received the Last Sacraments you are *obliged* to do this; for you

would sin grievously against charity were you the cause of one going to God unprepared.

If the person is fully prepared, however, and in acute pain, it is permissible to administer drugs that will relieve the pain even if incidentally they should destroy consciousness. But Nurse! and Doctor! you may *never* stop the saving flow of Christ's Mystical Blood by a *Euthanasia* that directly accelerates death! You may never approach the Christ, who is again writhing in His mystical agony, and break His legs in order to shorten that agony! You may never be another Longinus to pierce His side and break His Heart!

I know the temptation is strong. At times, even violent. The groans of the agonizing so stir our sympathies that we almost lose our senses. But when the whisper comes: "Put him out of his agony," know that is a whisper from hell; a whisper that found place in Jewish ears two thousand years ago, that Friday afternoon when the sun darkened toward three o'clock; a whisper that would rob God of glory, Christ of merit, and the world of grace. Realize that it is a whisper that would stop the flow of Blood in this Major Operation, this Blood Transfusion which the Divine Physician is performing for sick, suffering and very anemic mankind. Do! Do! Do! become conscious of the real presence of Christ hidden beneath the humble appearances of human flesh and blood. Do that and you will never administer the "*crurifragium*" and call it Euthanasia. You will never be guilty of the murder of a Mystical Member of Christ.

You see, Nurse and Doctor, our modern world is a cowardly world. It is afraid of life! It shrinks from its beginning and flees from its end. (Actually, it runs away from

what is in between.) But like all cowards it puts on a bold front and gives vent to a vast amount of inane bluster. That is why Washington has known lobbies for the dissemination of literature on "Birth-Control." Oh, the hypocrites! Why don't they call a spade a spade? Prevention is NOT control! Oh, the Benedict Arnolds of America! I wonder how many Sangers there are in the Solomons? in Africa? in Italy? in Australia, Alaska, or England? I wonder how many stalwarts she and her satellites have *prevented* from being in such places! I wonder how much blood of the "Birth-Controllers" has been spilt to save the four freedoms for the world. (No one of which is freedom to *prevent* nature from taking her course!) Why, Communism and Nazism cannot hold a candle to these people when it comes to a matter of destroying American civilization. Seemingly, they know nothing of Christ, of Christians, or of Christianity. Perhaps that is why they are such cowards!

At the other end of life's great adventure we find the other horde of shriveled-souled weaklings—the advocates of Euthanasia. It is not respect for man that leads these criminals on to their scientific murder; it is disrespect! They look upon man as we would upon a broken-down old horse or a superannuated dog. It is not his humanity but his animality that prompts these people to their purge—that's all it is! If they once saw the splendor of the human being they would be stupefied.

These individuals not only insult man, they insult the Maker of man. For what artist does not put much of himself in his work? Shakespeare is seen in Macbeth, Hamlet and Lear; Michelangelo is easily discerned in his

Moses, his Last Judgment, or in that magnificent dome which crowns St. Peter's Basilica; centuries have clearly seen Raphael in his many Madonnas. Yes, and centuries have seen God in that work of art with which He crowned His visible creation—man! God is as perceptible as the sun in a cloudless sky if we would only stare until we see.

Let me insist that this is no new truth that I am giving you. I am merely re-presenting the twenty-century-old doctrine of man's *deification*; a doctrine that somehow or other dimmed in the Catholic consciousness as the centuries rolled on, but which is being refurbished in our own day and brushed to such a splendor that it blinds those who have not the eagle-eyes of the well-instructed Catholic that can stare at such a sun—or if you prefer the earlier metaphor—the X-ray eyes that pierce appearances. Robert Browning said: "God's in His Heaven; all's right with the world." I need not tell you how foolishly false that is. Not in this day when our world literally wallows in divorce, abortion, contraception, sterilization, euthanasia, trial-marriage and free-love. But we do have to be reminded that God left His Heaven two thousand years ago just to put all in this world right. We do have to be reminded that He did His part perfectly: He came as a Divine Physician. He diagnosed our need. He ordered a Blood Transfusion. But He well knew that the only Blood that would help us was Divine Blood, so He opened the very ventricles of His Sacred Heart and set that Blood flowing through seven different arteries called "Sacraments." Yes, He did His part perfectly. But are we doing ours? Are we living conscious of our incorporation in Christ? Are we living con-

scious of the incorporation of every right-living Catholic in Christ? Are we living conscious of the possibility of the incorporation of every living human in that same Christ? In shortest short: Are you living as *Catholic* doctors and *Catholic* nurses? That means—acutely conscious of the Mystical Jesus? If you say: “Yes,” then I symbolize you in

THE MODERN PIETA

I differ from Michelangelo inasmuch as I have you cradling in your arms the suffering Christ, not His corpse. You are acquainted with the masterpiece to which I allude, are you not? Practically every Catholic has read that pulsing poem which that master-sculptor has put so poignantly in age-defying stone. Mary has the mutilated Body of her dead Boy on her lap. Tenderly she bends over that silent head which hangs so limply. She looks as if she were about to imprint a kiss on the Broken Host of the world's First Mass. Michelangelo has depicted Mother-love at its zenith.

So would I symbolize you bending over the Mystical Christ; for that is exactly what you do when you learn and *live* the doctrine of the Mystical Body. That doctrine enables you to see man for what he really is—a human who has broken the Christ-chrysalis and emerged a particle in the mystic Host, a drop of the mystic purple Wine. Yes, and this doctrine enables you to see your profession in all its splendor—for you see that in all truth you are assisting at a Blood Transfusion that merges into a transubstantiation. The *appearances* of the man remain, but mystically, he has been changed into the Christ! Hence, everything about you from the smallest white bandage to

the largest white bed-spread should speak to you of the snow-white corporal on which the priest rests the Physical Body and the Physical Blood of Jesus. They should tell you that you are resting the Mystical Body and the Mystical Blood of the Christ on a mystical corporal.

That is the thought I would have dominate your lives—the thought of the Mass. The truest truth that I can tell you is that you have made your life a mess unless you have made of it a Mass! “Come, follow Me,” said the Christ; and everyone who has accepted the invitation has learned that He leads them through the Cenacle, then to Calvary, and on to the glory of Easter’s empty tomb; everyone has learned that He leads them through the Mass! “Do this in commemoration of Me” were Christ’s words to the first class of priests ever ordained; but while those words were addressed to the consecrating priests primarily, they have a personal meaning for every baptized Catholic; for every baptized Catholic is an *offering* priest. Too often we forget, or perhaps we never have learned, that “Baptism is the *ordination* of the laity.” Since you are but broken syllables of the Word, and the Word is the great Highpriest, it necessarily follows that you, too, are priests. “You are a holy priesthood,” says St. Peter, and he is talking about you (1 Peter. 2,5). A little later in the same epistle he says: “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood” (1 Pet. 2,9). Take him at his word. He means the laity. He says that you are ordained “to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2,5). But you know the Sacrifice of the New Law. You know the “acceptable sacrifice offered through Jesus Christ.” It is the Mass! So let me say it

once again: If you make not your life a Mass, you make of it a mess! You have wasted your years making a living instead of making a life. You have failed in the Great Adventure. Believe me when I say you must be God-conscious, Christ-conscious, and therefore, acutely Mass-conscious before you can ever be truly self-conscious; that is, conscious of your true self!

Physically, you are a breath of God in a vessel of clay. But mystically you are a Christ saying a Mass! For you well know that the only operating table the Divine Physician ever knew was one to which He was not strapped, but one to which He was nailed! It was the Cross. Calvary is the world's Operating Room. And everyone who would live, and not merely exist, must go to that Operating Room, must lie on that operating table and receive life, the life of all living, from the Christ. That life begins with a sign of the Cross and the words: "*Introibo ad altare Dei*—I will go unto the altar of God." It ends on the Cross with the words: "*Ite, missa est*"—which Christ translated as: "It is finished," but which Christians translate as: "It now begins!" For they realize that death is Life's commencement rather than life's consummation!

Now we are thinking some Catholic thoughts that are not often enough thought by Catholics. You think them constantly and you will be preparing to say your own "*Ite, missa est*," by helping others say theirs. I was very insistent that you keep the Blood flowing through the artery of Baptism, wasn't I? I would now be even more insistent that you keep it flowing through the artery of Extreme Unction. For while the beginning of life is im-

portant, the right ending of earthly life is more so.

In cases of necessity you may administer the Sacrament of Baptism, but you may never administer the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. So be on the alert to *call a priest*, else God will not be the success He desires to be and yours will be the fault. I know there is a false sentimentality and a foul pagan psychology that says a patient should not be told that death is near. But Nurse! and Doctor! is it fair? Would you send a medical student into his State Board Examination unprepared? Would you bring a law-school graduate into his Bar Exam without previous warning? Would you allow a student-nurse to be taken unawares by her final examiners? Of course you wouldn't. And yet there is always a second chance at such examinations. Of God's final exam there are no re-takes! Then why should any muddle-headed sentimentalist dare say that you should not "frighten a patient to death" by telling him or her that God is at hand for the final assize? Isn't it the acme of stupidity? Isn't it much better to "frighten them to death" than to cajole them into Hell? Be fair! Tell your patient when death is nigh. Tell him or her in Catholic words. Tell them that they are about to say their "*Ite, missa est.*"

Your duties, then, are clear. They are three in number: 1) Inform a priest. 2) Inform the patient. 3) Pray! Yes, you must pray, for you are really assisting at the close of a Mass. As you know there is only one response to "*Ite, missa est,*" it is: "*Deo gratias!*"—Thank You, God. Thank Him for what? Thank Him for what has just been

completed and for what has just been begun—
Eternal life!

Michelangelo's Pietá is fitting tableau for the close of Christ's great drama—the Mass. To close the Christian's drama there is nothing more fitting than the modern Pietá. And it is you, Nurse and Doctor, who cradle the Christ in your arms!

So you see, I am back where I began: Your profession is sublime because your patients are sacred. Therefore, any doctor who puts stethoscope to human breast and hears not the beat of the Divinity is not a Catholic doctor! Any nurse who takes human pulse and fails to feel the throb of the Infinite Three in One is not a Catholic nurse!

There I would end if I were sure that you could always get a priest for your patient's "Ite, missa est." But I know there will be occasions when *you* will have to supply for the priest. So I must add a truth many lay people forget—the truth about the Judgment.

The first and the most important fact to realize is that God is NOT an Avenger! Get that truth into the very blood of your being so that you can convince dying people that the Judgment is for REWARD as well as for punishment. I know that you will have to do some real work to get this TRUTH into your soul, for our daily experience with legal justice is such that every time we think of a judge and his judgment, we think of condemnation. But do that necessary work! For we are wrong, and very wrong when we transfer this false concept to the Divine Judge and His Final Judgment. He is Justice, it is true; but let no one forget that it is equally true that He is *Mercy!* It was God the Holy Ghost who

inspired the Psalmist to sing: "His mercies are above all His works" (Ps. 144,9). St. Bernard has well said that His very Justice will force Him to be merciful! Tell your patients that *truth*.

But even on the side of strict justice, let us remember that God is more anxious to reward than He is to punish, else why the Incarnation? Was it not Christ Himself who made the baffling statement that "There will be more joy in Heaven over one sinner doing penance than over ninety-nine just? (Lk. 15,7) Does it not follow then, that Heaven has sharper eyes for good than for evil? Does it not further follow that God will be keenly mindful of every good thought, every good word, every good gesture? They say that "Hell is paved with good intentions." That is a cynical lie! Good intentions honestly made, followed by a real effort to carry them out, are flag-stones on the highway to Heaven. And God has numbered every one of them! The only thing He has promised to forget is our repented iniquities. That is what Holy Writ tells us!

Tell your dying patients these truths. Tell them that God *loves* them and has "loved them with an *everlasting* love" (Jer. 31,3). Tell them that God longs for them with a lover's longing. Tell them that He is so anxious to greet them that He cannot wait for them to come to Him; He has to come to them! Oh, do tell them that truth! Insist that the Angel of Death is none other than the Divine Physician who came on earth to perform one Major Operation just that they might live forever! Convince them that death is not the end, but the beginning.

If they still speak fearfully about the Judgment, tell them that while it is true that they

go to be judged, they must remember that it is their Father who is to do the judging! Dwell long on this truth. Make them realize that no one can be afraid of judgement when their own father is the judge. Shame? Oh, yes. I suppose all of us have plenty of reason for shame; but *afraid?*—Never! Then to banish all fear give them the true picture of Christ. Show them that He is their LOVER! To prove it just hold up the crucifix and say: “Greater love than this no man hath. . . .” (Jno. 15,13).

Tell me truly, can anyone be “scared to death” by the realization that they are about to meet their lover? Hardly! Well, that is what death is to the Catholic. It is a rendezvous with Christ Jesus; with Him who so loved us that His mighty Heart actually broke from love’s excess; as Longinus’ spear so eloquently testifies! Once you have insisted on these truths your patient will see that he is going to find on the other side of the veil not a Judge so much as an ADVOCATE!

That is the psychology to use, medical friends—Catholic Psychology! Force out physical fear by forcing in mystical love. Say: “My Jesus, mercy!” with your patient and say it often, for we all have need of mercy; but at the same time teach them to say: “Come, my Lord, my Life, my Love! Lord Jesus, my Lover, come!”

Do that and I will not be wrong when I portray you as the modern Pietá. Do that and you will be making your life a Mass. Do that and you will have helped God be a success!

* * * * *

FINAL WORD—“WOUNDS”

I want you to remember that the Pietá that symbolizes you and your profession is a *mod-*

ern Pietá. The Christ in your arms is not dead; He is only wounded. For Jesus Christ "dies no more." (Rom. 6,9) Yes, He is wounded; but remember what His Physical wounds effected and you will thrill to the rôle He allows you to fill in the great modern drama of His mystical life.

What was it that pleaded eloquently enough to have God the Father batter down the impregnable barrier that barred man from Heaven? What was it that pleaded eloquently enough to cause the Angel to sheathe the fiery sword he had brandished at Eden's gate for centuries? What was it that pleaded eloquently enough to change the drama of mankind from the tragedy of "Paradise Lost" into the romance of "Paradise Regained"? What was it?—WOUNDS! Yes, wounds on the Physical Body of Jesus Christ. They were the dumb mouths that pleaded eloquently enough to win Redemption!

There are wounds on the Mystical Body of Jesus. They plead with like eloquence and like effectiveness. They are the suffering, the sick! Yours is the honor, the dignity, aye, the rhapsody to treat those "wounds" and thus help the Mystical Jesus with the Redeeming! You are not going to fail God, are you?

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