CATHOLIC HEALTH CARE LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE

CHRIST CENTERED CARE

President's Column

"The word became flesh and dwelt among us." John 1:14

Dear Friends in Christ,

Once again, we have completed our spiritual journey through the season of Advent, culminating in the glorious celebration of the Nativity of our Lord, Jesus Christ. We recall the profound gift of the Word assuming our human nature, restoring our friendship with God and granting us a share in His own life that we might continue His mission, "proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom and curing every disease and illness." (Mt. 9:35)

For all those called to serve as missionary disciples in the vocation of medicine – physicians and nurses, allied healthcare professionals and chaplains, ethicists and administrators – we are all given the profound privilege and responsibility of carrying on the healing ministry of the Divine Physician, caring for the sick and dying for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

This is Catholic healthcare! Its distinctive characteristic is its foundation, the healing Love and Mercy of its founder, Jesus Christ, administered by members of His Mystical Body, the Church, in conformity with her Sacred Tradition.

The mission of the CHCLA is to ensure the continued flourishing of Catholic healthcare by the grace of God through effective collaboration with leaders of its member organizations. Drawing upon the experience and expertise of Catholic leaders from all disciplines involved in healthcare, we are addressing

both the challenges and opportunities that exist in our current dysfunctional medical care delivery system. In our short four-year history, we have successfully launched three initiatives, creating the foundation and framework for the mission.

This year, we held the fourth annual educational Symposium for the Advancement of Catholic Health Care at the Catholic University of America, Busch School of Business, titled "The Business of Catholic Health Care: Effectively Administering Christ's Healing Ministry."

A host of experts, including a canon lawyer, health policy analysts, business professionals, Catholic health system executives and Catholic clinic directors, surveyed the current state of financing and administration of medical care, exploring alternative models that allow for greater freedom in designing health plans and directing payments for those interventions aligned with Catholic medical ethics and to those practitioners who practice in conformity with the Ethical and Religious Directives of the USCCB.

The Institute for Public Policy and Advocacy lead by Louis Brown, Esq., continues its engagement with senior government officials at the federal and state level, advocating for legislation and regulations that support conscience rights and health care reform based on the principles of Catholic social teaching with a pro-life vision for Catholic health care outlined by Mr. Brown in a recent op-ed in the National Catholic Register.

Finally, the Center for Support of the Catholic Healing Ministry continues building a community of Catholic medical clinics and health systems with the goal of developing a network of Catholic entities that work collaboratively to create and share models of care that are financially sustainable and built upon the Rock (Mt. 7:24-27) that will withstand all current and future assaults on life, liberty and truth.

However, there is still a great deal of work to be done. Healthcare is at the epicenter of the culture war in America, a battle referred to by Cardinal Karol Wojtyla while visiting the United States in 1976 as "the greatest historical confrontation humanity has gone through…the final confrontation between the Church and the anti-Church, of the Gospel versus the anti-Gospel."

America needs a revival of Christian culture to counter this assault of the culture of death, and an essential component of that revival must be a robust revitalization of Catholic healthcare. Again, Karol Wojtyla, now St. Pope John Paul II, made this point in an address to Catholic healthcare leaders in 1987. He said, "Your ministry is one of the most vital apostolates of the ecclesial community and one of the most significant services which the

Catholic Church offers to society in the name of Jesus Christ…your apostolate penetrates and transforms the very fabric of American society."

Our hope for the continued success of the mission lies in the reality of the Incarnation and the fact that two thousand years ago "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" in the words of St. Paul, as a revelation of "the mystery of God's will…to restore all things in Christ." (Eph. 1:9-10)

Through Him, with Him, and in Him, we are being empowered by the Holy Spirit to restore a culture of life in America by faithfully proclaiming the Gospel and carrying on the healing ministry of the Divine Physician.

Thank you for your continued prayers and financial support, and may you be blessed with an abundance of joy, peace and good health throughout the New Year!

Sincerely in Christ,

Steven White, M.D.
President, CHCLA