CATHOLIC HEALTH CARE LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE

CHRIST CENTERED CARE

August 2023 Newsletter

President's Column

Dear Friends in Christ,

I hope everyone has had a little time for leisure and relaxation this summer. Healthy, wholesome recreation is an integral part of our re-creation in Christ. Time away from the hustle and bustle of daily life is refreshment for body and soul. An enjoyable vacation can be physically, emotionally and spiritually restorative.

This is especially important today given the incredibly complex and challenging societal circumstances in which we live and work. Returning to our daily routine after a great vacation might feel a bit like the descent of the apostles from the mount of the Transfiguration – from an experience of great joy and peace to the harsh reality of trials and tribulations. Recall that shortly after they experienced Christ's revelation in all His glory, He announced that He would be handed over to his enemies and killed. After their exhilarating experience on the mount, nothing could have been more disconcerting for Peter, James and John.

Although our circumstances can't be compared to the devastating upheaval that must have surrounded our Lord's passion and death, we do have our hands full contending with the abortion battles, transgender ideology, legalized euthanasia and in general, the foundering of the institutions necessary for society's survival, i.e., marriage and family, church and government, civic organizations and businesses.

Fortunately, people are beginning to wake up and speak up acknowledging America is headed in the wrong direction. However, amid so much chaos and confusion many are at a loss to understand how in the world we got here and where to turn for help. Answering those questions correctly will determine our future.

In medicine we routinely evaluate signs and symptoms to establish a correct diagnosis which leads to a prescription for corrective action. Similarly, societal problems including the breakdown in families, the divisions in our politics and churches, and the epidemic of violence and mental illness are signs and symptoms of underlying philosophical, theological, ethical, and political disorders that must be correctly understood if we hope to avert the disastrous consequences of failing to prescribe effective corrective action.

Some might ask what the evaluation of these societal disorders has to do with restoring Christian values in healthcare and the mission of CHCLA. My response is – A LOT!

Healthcare both influences and is influenced by culture. Tragically the prevailing culture in America today, a "culture of death," has profoundly influenced the medical profession. In turn, by embracing contraception, abortion, euthanasia and gender ideology the profession has contributed significantly to establishing these medical atrocities as cultural norms, deceptively referred to in medical jargon as "evidence-based standards of care."

So, addressing these cultural problems, correctly identifying root causes and finding solutions has everything to do with CHCLA's mission to defend and promote Catholic medical ethics in practice and Catholic social teaching in the reform of the healthcare delivery system. In doing so, healthcare can contribute significantly to the transformation of society from a "culture of death" to a "culture of life."

It is very important therefore to read the cultural "signs of the times" correctly as they relate to healthcare. And while medical professionals can assess the signs and symptoms of medical disorders, the expertise of others is required for the evaluation of our complex social pathologies. One of the goals of CHCLA is to bring together individuals and organizations with the knowledge and experience necessary to address the whole spectrum of issues that impact the delivery of Christ-centered medical care.

Hopefully, bringing attention to the work of Janet Smith and Mary Eberstadt recently has been helpful in providing insight into the devastating cultural consequences of the sexual revolution and the widespread practice of

contraception. We will continue to introduce important topics and provide resources for a more in-depth study of relevant issues in future newsletters.

Since identifying root causes is essential for the development of effective solutions, I would like to share two articles that help in this regard.

The first is by Msgr. Charles Fink, a priest of the Diocese of Rockville Center. In his article, titled "What's Wrong with the World," Msgr. Fink astutely identifies a modern misunderstanding of freedom – "the right to do anything we please," – as a root cause of the current chaos in the world. He goes on to say that without addressing this underlying cause, "proffered solutions will always remain fruitless," and there will not be "enough laws in the land to control the chaos." This misunderstanding and abuse of freedom is clearly manifested in abortion, euthanasia and gender transition and has undermined the fundamental medical ethic to "do no harm."

The second article is by Dr. Carrie Gress, titled "LGBTQ+ May Seem New, but It Grew from an Old Ideology." It's obvious from the title that this has direct relevance to one of the most urgent problems we encounter in healthcare today – disorders of sexual orientation and gender identity. Dr. Gress documents the century's old feminist movement as a root cause of our current "societal wreckage" including the LGBTQ+ sexual agenda. The article provides a summary of a much more detailed account found in her new book, "The End of Woman: How Smashing the Patriarchy has Destroyed Us."

Finally, I will close with a quote from an encyclical letter of Pope St. Pius X, whose memorial we celebrated this month. It was written in 1904 to celebrate the pontificate of Pope St. Gregory the Great (590-604) and his remarkable success in sustaining the Church and society during the collapse of the Western Roman Empire and the barbarian invasion of Italy. After describing Pope Gregory's many accomplishments, Pope Pius writes that we too should remain confident of success in our own time if we remain steadfast in Faith.

"The times are indeed greatly changed. But, as We have more than once repeated, nothing is changed in the life of the Church. From the Divine Founder she has inherited the virtue of being able to supply at all times, however much they may differ, all that is required not only for the spiritual welfare of souls…but also everything that aids progress in true civilization." (#33)

His confidence in the Church and God's providence should give us cause for great hope in the chaotic and challenging circumstances of our own time.

So as summer draws to a close and we return from whatever time of leisure we may have enjoyed, I pray that we will be reinvigorated in our commitment to proclaim the Gospel with great confidence and to serve one another in the love of Christ as we continue the important work of building His kingdom in the ministry of healthcare.

God Bless,
Steven White, MD
President, CHCLA