CATHOLIC HEALTH CARE LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE

CHRIST CENTERED CARE

November 2023 Newsletter

President's Column

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus."
1 Thessalonians 5:18

Dear Friends in Christ,

'Tis the season for giving thanks! And while a spirit of gratitude is essential every day of our lives, last week's annual Thanksgiving Day celebration is a wonderful American tradition in which we gather collectively as a nation with family and friends to express our thanks to God and one another for the blessings we have received throughout the year.

This year, while perusing a variety of historic Thanksgiving Day stories, one message from the past seemed particularly relevant for our times and circumstances.

It was in 1863 at the height of the Civil War shortly after the loss of over fifty thousand American lives in the Battle of Gettysburg, clearly a time of deep and painful division and profound uncertainty, that President Abraham Lincoln delivered a Thanksgiving Proclamation permanently establishing a day of "thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father" as a national holiday. While similar thanksgiving celebrations had taken place since the first communal gathering recorded by English settlers in 1621, none had taken place during such a devastating national crisis.

It is due to the similarity of our circumstances today with those of 1863, fraught with division and violence over disagreements regarding human life and liberty, that the words of President Lincoln echoing from the past serve as a reminder of the importance of thanksgiving and repentance amid dire adversity.

He spoke as President "of the entire nation" and called upon all Americans to give thanks for the "bounties which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come… which are of so extraordinary a nature that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever-watchful providence of God."

Even in the "midst of a civil war of unequaled magnitude and severity" he foresaw a "continuance of years with augmented strength and vigor with large increase in freedom" and called all people to "humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience" and "to fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation to restore it… to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union."

Engaged in a monumental battle for the survival of the nation, President Lincoln demonstrated his reliance on faith in almighty God, trust in His providence and love of country and all its people which can inspire and enlighten us today as we seek to resolve the bitter discord in America threatening our "full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union."

Many of the most volatile and divisive issues plaguing our nation today involve controversies in health care. From drastically divergent opinions regarding contraception and abortion at the beginning of life to physician assisted suicide at its end, we seem as incapable as our predecessors of addressing our differences in a civil, rational and peaceful fashion. We would do well to apply the wisdom expressed in Lincoln's Thanksgiving Proclamation to the political and cultural warfare of our day.

The CHCLA is providing significant help in this regard by advancing the long-standing tradition of truth, beauty and goodness in Catholic health care practiced in harmony with the mind and heart of Christ and introducing it into the public sphere through evangelization, education, advocacy and mutual support. By defending life, human dignity and religious liberty, we are promoting the health and human flourishing of all people which can lead to healing, reconciliation and peace in society as well.

'Tis the season to give thanks and we are certainly very grateful for the spiritual and material support we have received from many of you reading this newsletter. With your support, we have made significant progress in just

two years establishing the organizational foundation necessary to continue this important work and developing relationships with the various disciplines involved in health care delivery necessary for our continued success.

Of course, the work has only just begun so we need yours and others continued help. Please continue to pray for us and contribute financially as you are able. Also, please share this newsletter with others and encourage them to join us and support the mission.

Finally, let's remain united in one Spirit as the Body of Christ in celebrating the perfect act of thanksgiving – the Holy Eucharist – thanking God for His abundant blessings and imploring His divine assistance as we restore His kingdom in health care.

God bless,
Steven White, M.D.
President, CHCLA