



June 2008

Report on CCBI's Conference for Catholic Physicians:
The Vocation of the Catholic Physician
Integrating the Practical, the Bioethical and the Spiritual

Dear Friends,

The first conference organized by CCBI for Canadian Catholic physicians was held April 25 – 27 on the campus of the University of St. Michael's College. Hosted by Archbishop Thomas Collins of the Archdiocese of Toronto, it attracted nearly 100 participants, about sixty of whom were physicians. They came from British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Quebec, and Ontario. This made for a representative and worthwhile gathering—pretty impressive as a response to this first venture.

Keynote speakers were Myles Sheehan, MD, SJ; Iain Benson, LLB; Tom Maddix, CSC, and Bishop Ronald Fabbro, CSB. Archbishop Collins spoke at the Saturday evening banquet. Workshops were presented by Maria Kraw, MD; Hanna Klaus, MD, Hazel Markwell, PhD, Deborah Zeni, MD; Joseph Ayoub, MD and Dom Renzo Pegoraro, MD.

Sunday Liturgy brought the conference to an end with Archbishop Collins as presider and homilist; Bishop Fabbro; Rob Allore, SJ; Damian MacPherson, SA, Dom Renzo Pegararo, MD; Deacon Terry De Souza, MD, and with coordination by Deacon Daniel Gana. One of the conference participants, Raymond Shu, MD, was our organist, and the cantor was Marcos Ramos, OP. We especially wish to thank the Basilian Community and Father David Katulski, CSB, for the use of their beautiful chapel.

So many people were involved in making the conference a success. Simultaneous translation was provided by Michel Côté, OP, and colleagues. Neil MacCarthy and Emanuel Pires did a wonderful job of publicizing the event, and designing the brochure and posters. CCBI staff worked long hours advertising the conference, and took care of registration, accreditation (with thanks to Dr. Maria Kraw), and general organization. Thank you to volunteer Christina Lamb! We also heartily thank St. Michael's College Conference and Catering Services staff.

Special thanks go to the planning committee for suggestions and commitment, enthusiasm and encouragement: John Gay, MD; Anthony Kerigan, MD; Jaro Kotalik, MD; Joseph Ayoub, MD; Rene Leiva, MD; Rory Fisher, MD; and Neil McCarthy, Archdiocese of Toronto. Bambi Rutledge and I represented CCBI.

In particular, CCBI thanks Frank Crothers for his generosity and dedicated support of this initiative.

I thought it was wonderful to be part of such a lively gathering, and to see so many energetic, young, Catholic physicians interested in the vocational aspects of their work, and eager to develop. Our intention was to raise spirits, metaphorically and religiously, to encourage physicians in their extremely important vocation, to consider some of the more challenging questions of conscience that arise in medical practice, and to foster community. From what I observed, and from the reactions of many people, it seems that the conference met those objectives.

A meeting held early on Sunday morning confirmed that many would like to be part of a national, Catholic physicians' group that could respond to medical-moral questions from a Canadian standpoint. CCBI is helping to gather information from other Catholic medical groups, since the meeting concluded with the intention of drawing up a constitution to bring a new Catholic Canadian group into being.

Moira McQueen
Executive Director