



Catholicism &
the Future
of Medicine:
A Symposium



Catholicism and the Future of Medicine: A Symposium

Hosted by the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family and the Center for Cultural and Pastoral Research.

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Statement:

The fate of Catholic medicine, for obvious reasons, is a matter of growing concern. Rising health care costs, the emergence of giant for-profit health care systems, the decline in religious vocations, controversy over reproductive medicine, end of life care and other bioethical issues, and new government regulations limiting religious liberty are all conspiring to reduce or perhaps even eliminate the institutionalized presence of Catholicism in American healthcare over the course of the next generation. This naturally raises the question of what place there may be for Catholicism in health care in the coming years.

This is not the only question; however, nor even, perhaps, the most important. Western medicine is a highly advanced science, but it is also an art nurtured from its very beginning within the bosom of the Church. The Church's understanding of the human person, its distinctive notions of health and of care, and the discipline of religious life all helped give birth to hospital and to medical care in the West and have profoundly shaped the self-understanding and institutions of modern medicine, its view of the patient, and the meaning of the medical calling up till now. Perhaps a still more urgent question, then, is not, what is the fate of Catholicism in modern medicine, but what is the fate of modern medicine once its religious roots are forgotten?

This symposium will address various facets of this question and will explore the assumption that the soul of modern medicine is Catholic.

Themes:

The Catholic Roots and Changing Anthropology of Western Medicine

The Fate of the Patient: Who is the Patient? What is Health?

Meeting Suffering

The Fate of Institutions:

Opportunities for Catholic Medicine

Invited Speakers:

Glenn Olsen; Michael Hanby;

Sara Deola; Andrew Miles;

Ruth Ashfield; Mary Hamm;

Sr. Mary Diana Dreger, O.P.;

Allen Aksamit; Thomas Hilgers;

Jack Lane