



# Adsum

*Adsum* is published by the seminarians of **Mater Dei Seminary** for the enjoyment of our families, friends, and benefactors.

## LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

The clergy and seminarians of Mater Dei Seminary wish you, your family and friends a most joyful and Blessed Christmas and a grace-filled New Year!

This issue of the *Adsum* was delayed in publication because we wanted to share the photographs of our recent ordinations to the minor and major orders. It is our custom to honor Our Blessed Mother, our patroness, by ordinations in December on her feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12th.

We wish to congratulate Franz and Leopold Trauner (Austria), Krysztof Handke (Poland), and Noah Ellis (Kentucky) on their reception of the minor orders of Porter and Lector; Frater Alphonsus Vincent, CMRI (Idaho) on the reception of the minor orders of Exorcist and Acolyte; Rev. Caleb Armour (Scotland), Rev. Giles Pardue (Alabama), Rev. Matias Chimenton (Argentina), Rev. Adam Craig (Michigan), Rev. Wojciech Wieckowski (Poland) and Frater Aloysius Hartman, CMRI (Arizona) on the reception of the Diaconate.

Throughout this Advent season, our Holy Mother the Church frequently in the liturgy presents to us the Old Testament prophecies, especially Isaias the prophet. How wonderfully God foretold the coming of the long awaited Divine Messiah. In the first chapter of Isaias we read: “The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master’s crib, but Israel hath not known me and

my people have not understood.” At the conclusion of every Mass, we are reminded of this in the recitation of the *Last Gospel*: “He was in the world and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not; and He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” (John 1:1-14) Again Isaias foretold a most amazing event: “Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son and His name shall be called Emmanuel (God with us).” (Isaias 7:14) Two chapters later, the same prophet continued to describe Our Divine Savior:



“For unto us a Child is born and unto us a Son is given and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace!” (Isaias 9:6) Lastly, in the book of Wisdom, written about a hundred years before the coming of Christ, we read: “While all things were in quiet silence and night was in the midst of her course,

Thy Almighty Word, O Lord, came down from Heaven, from Thy Royal Throne.” (Wisdom 18:14-15) When the prophet Micheas had prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, we see the Providence of God in the decree of Caesar Augustus which would bring St. Joseph and Our Lady to Bethlehem.

All of the beautiful prophecies are a powerful reminder to us that God is all-knowing; He knows the past, the present and the future. This should inspire us with a great trust in His Divine Providence in our own lives.

With my prayers and blessing,

Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI



*Seminarians receive the minor orders of Porter and Lector*



*Frater Alphonsus Vincent, CMRI receives the minor orders of Exorcist and Acolyte*



*The ordinandi receive instructions on the obligations of the Diaconate*



*That Thou wouldst vouchsafe to bless, sanctify and consecrate these elect*



*The imposition of hands for the Diaconate*



*The clergy and seminarians of Mater Dei Seminary following the ordinations*

# Fr. Connell Answers Moral Questions

by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.

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## ANESTHESIA OF A DYING PERSON

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**Question:** If a nurse is commanded by a doctor to give a dying person a drug or hypodermic injection that will render him unconscious up to the moment of death, is she permitted to obey the order?

**Answer:** If the dying person has not been informed of the seriousness of his condition and is (probably or certainly) unprepared for death, it is a very grave sin to render him unconscious with the provisions that he will die in that state, until he has been warned that the end of life is approaching and given an opportunity to set his soul in order. This principle holds even in the event that the patient is suffering intense physical pain and is craving for relief in the form of an anesthetic. For, in such a case, all other considerations must yield to the all-important duty of urging the dying person to prepare for his entrance into eternity. In a case of this kind, therefore, a nurse would not be allowed to administer a drug or hypodermic injection with the realization that the patient will probably not recover consciousness before death. She must refuse the doctor's orders, or at least let the dying person know of his condition and let him have some time to prepare for death before she gives the anesthetic.

If, however, it is morally certain that the sufferer is sufficiently prepared for death—which, in the case of a Catholic, means that he has received the sacraments—the nurse could lawfully give the prescribed treatment, at least in certain circumstances. Some authors would allow this only in the supposition that the patient is in great pain. For, they say, the last moments of life are so precious from the spiritual standpoint, affording opportunities for fervent acts of contrition, love and resignation, that the deliberate inducing of a state of unconsciousness can be permitted only when there is an adequate compensating reason, such as relief from excruciating pain. Others allow the administration of a stupefying drug also in the event that the sick person is likely to fall into impatience or despair and thus lose the state of grace; while others add that if the patient asks for drugs in good faith, and there is no hope of setting him right, they may be given him. But all this presupposes that sufficient warning of his approaching death has been given him, as well as an opportunity to prepare his soul for eternity.

It might be asked if the nurse could administer a drug calculated to deprive the dying person of the use of reason if he has been told of his condition and yet refuses to profit by the warning—for example, if a Catholic in such circumstances refuses to receive the sacraments. It would seem that in such a case the nurse could give the anesthetic if the dying person himself requests it, on the principle: *Scienti et volenti nulla fit injuria*. But if the doctor prescribes the drug on his own authority without consulting the patient, it is difficult to see how the nurse would be justified in administering it, at least if there is any reason to hope that the obdurate sufferer will repent and turn to God.

At any even, in a Catholic home or hospital it should be the endeavor of those who assist the dying to give them no greater amount of drugs than is necessary to diminish the pain, so that they may devote their last moments on earth toward preparing their souls for the great journey that lies before them.

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