Letter from the Editor

Response to Annmarie Hosie

Dear Annmarie,

First I want to thank you for reading *The Linacre Quarterly* and taking time to write your letter. It is only through readers like you who care enough to offer criticism that we can improve our journal. I also want to thank you for your prayerful reflection before writing. Prayer always is effective.

I want to address what I think is your main point, that in reading some of the articles we have published on same-sex attraction (SSA), you “cannot hear the Word of God in them. They are divisive, not unitive. They do not come across as gentle or humble or patient in their teaching.” I take this criticism very seriously. It is never our intention to be offensive, but only to uphold the principles of the Catholic Church in the science and practice of medicine which is the mission of the Catholic Medical Association. We try to do this primarily by striving to speak the truth in love. Clearly Jesus always did this. He is both Truth and Love incarnate. Our duty as Christians is to follow Him, and, specifically as Catholic physicians, to bring His truth and love into the medical profession. I would like to state my belief that Jesus always spoke out of love. Jesus is God, and we know God is love and only acts out of love for us, His creatures. However, it is not always easy to see the love in some of Jesus, words in the Scriptures. For example, see the

Gospel of Matthew 12:34–37 and 23:1–36. Here is the shorter of these passages, Matthew 12:34–37: Jesus addresses some of the Pharisees,

You brood of vipers, how can you say good things when you are evil? For from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks. A good person brings forth good out of a store of goodness, but an evil person brings forth evil out of a store of evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment people will render an account for every careless word they speak. By your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.

We have to strive to understand how it can be loving for Jesus to call a group of people a brood of vipers. In this particular case, we see Jesus is addressing a group of Pharisees who had just said “This man drives out demons only by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons” (Mt 12:24). Thus, they were trying to turn people away from Jesus. In this way, they would have led those people away from what was truly good for them. Yet I have to believe that Jesus loved those Pharisees who were making these wild accusations against Him. So Jesus, motivation was loving, but His words were harsh. My interpretation is that Jesus was trying to send them a wake-up call. He was trying to turn them from doing what was wrong to doing what was right. But He also

wanted to make sure that their false teaching did not mislead other people. Thus, the situation called for harsh words.

As Christians sometimes we may be called on to give that wake-up call to someone especially if they are leading others astray. In this case, the audience is the key. Jesus has great compassion and displays tender and loving care for sinners and for those who are going the wrong way, especially those who hear His voice and respond with repentance and humility (e.g., the woman caught in adultery, the woman with a hemorrhage, etc.). He has stronger words for those who lead His people astray (the Scribes and Pharisees). In the same way, when speaking about SSA, we live in a society where the prevailing voices would lead many to enter into this lifestyle in spite of the negative aspects that science attests to (many of which are discussed in this issue of *The Linacre Quarterly*). In particular the medical and psychological professions, especially certain professional organizations, have turned a blind eye to the scientific data in this area. This is greatly to the detriment of those with SSA. Where can someone with SSA go to hear the truth? I would hope that the Catholic Medical Association and *The Linacre Quarterly* could be that voice of truth, spoken in love, but understanding that this may require a harsh word in some cases, depending on whom the word is directed toward.

My hope is that we would convey what the Church teaches about individuals with SSA: they are children of God who should be treated with the utmost dignity and respect. We all suffer from sin, from disordered desires; and as you rightly point out we are all in the same boat. But without the truth, there is no way we can understand how to remedy our situation. For those who are ignoring the truth and

misleading others, a wake-up call may be needed. I believe Dr. van den Aardweg¹ and Dr. Kinney were trying to issue such a wake-up call to those in the medical profession who ignore the data about SSA and to those who promote the gay lifestyle. The tone may appear harsh, but this should be seen in the context of their careers. For example, Dr. van den Aardweg has spent decades treating individuals with SSA with the devotion, care, and respect. I believe a careful reading of their articles will show the utmost respect for individuals with SSA. Their criticism is leveled on the activist gay movement, which promotes this lifestyle and in so doing leads many more deeply into actions with many negative consequences.

However, we are imperfect and may have stated some things in a way that was unclear and thus may have appeared unnecessarily offensive. We must take seriously Jesus admonishment, "By your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." If things were phrased in a way that leads to an interpretation suggesting we at *The Linacre Quarterly* lack respect for individuals with SSA, that is a fault in the editing process for which I apologize and which we will strive to improve.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Deacon William V. Williams, M.D.

Editor in Chief.

The Linacre Quarterly

NOTE

1. Note that Dr. van den Aardweg's way of thinking about homosexuality and homosexuals can best be grasped from his book *The Battle of Normality: A Guide for (Self-) Therapy for Homosexuality* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997).