



A unique responsibility belongs to health-care personnel: doctors, pharmacists, nurses, chaplains, men and women religious, administrators and volunteers. Their profession calls for them to be **guardians and servants of human life.**

*Evangelium Vitae*, n. 89.

Catholic Medical Professionals face the culture of death daily. Sensitive to these challenges, Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien invites you to come to the Church for support, prayer, and education.

For more information about resources available:  
[www.archbalt.org/respect-life/medical-professionals.cfm](http://www.archbalt.org/respect-life/medical-professionals.cfm),  
(410) 547-5537, or [life@archbalt.org](mailto:life@archbalt.org).



*You who are the Way, provide us with the gift of knowing how to imitate you every day as medical [professionals] not only of the body but of the whole person, helping those who are sick to tread with trust their own earthly path until the moment of their encounter with You.*

*You who are the Truth, provide us with the gift of wisdom and science in order to penetrate the mystery of the human person and their transcendent destiny as we draw near to them in order to discover the causes of their maladies and find suitable remedies.*

*You who are the Life, provide us with the gift of preaching and bearing witness to the 'Gospel of life' in our profession, committing ourselves to defending it always, from conception to its natural end, and to respect the dignity of every human being, and especially the dignity of the weakest and the most in need.*

*from "Prayer of the Catholic Doctor," Pope John Paul II*



**Excerpts from Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien's Homily for the White Mass, October 2009**

You, along with ever-conscientious believers, should surely be aware of that holy mystery that resides in the core of every human being, the mystery insisted upon from the first book of the Bible, that we are all made in the image and likeness of God. . . .

So is your call to faith every day, every moment of the day.

. . . . The body, as we well know, decays rapidly—it is ultimately the soul that counts. **The soul of every human being counts.** Indeed, the soul of a profession counts as well. There is a moral leprosy that can eat away within the body politic as well as the corpus medicum and you good Catholic medical professionals must persevere, stay the course in attacking that moral leprosy within your own noble community.

Such leprosy lurks, for instance, within some “quality of life” dilemmas: judgments which so often end in denying appropriate medical care to individuals deemed by some to be unworthy. These denials pervade parts of the medical profession today and invite some clinicians to “play God.” Pope John Paul II described this subtle but corrosive presumption as follows: It is clear that, “There is no place in the world for anyone who appears completely at the mercy of others and radically dependent on them, and can only communicate through the silent language of a profound sharing of suffering.” (EV #19)

And what are we to say of an unease all citizens of Maryland should feel in a state with monumental budget deficits and drastic cuts in human services where, nevertheless, \$12.4 million has been funded for the Maryland Stem Cell Research Fund much, if not most of which, goes into research unnecessarily involving the destruction of human embryos. Over the past three years, \$56 million has been allotted to this cause.

**Thank you, Catholic medical professionals and continue to stay the course in upholding and promoting the consistent, clear and unchangeable principle of life** enunciated by Pope John Paul II: “The use of human embryos or fetuses as an object of experimentation constitutes a crime against their dignity as human beings who have a right to the same respect owed a child once born, just as to every person.” (EV #63)

. . . . The conscience rights of Catholic medical professionals was the subject of our first annual symposium this past spring, which many of you attended. I would ask for your continued support as we seek to make a special annual effort to bring in quality speakers who can address today's pressing, controverted issues which confront you and your peers. The weight can be heavy to bear, but from you who have been given much, the Lord will expect much in return. Christ's grace will supply you as it does all who seek genuine holiness.

We thank you for your sacrifices and your continuing commitment to uphold our Church's long-standing, clear and sometimes lonely clarion call for life, despite widespread and vociferous opposition. Persevere and stay the course.

Even here in Baltimore City we've seen how aggressively our efforts can be opposed, where a bill before the City Council would—believe it or not—perniciously and wantonly target for arbitrary penalties the good work of prolife pregnancy resource centers. These centers are non-profit organizations that provide emotional, material and practical assistance to pregnant and parenting women seeking assistance.

**It is all too obvious that today's culture of death tolerates no competition. But we will persevere and stay the course. . . .**

In my two years in Baltimore, I have come to know and admire so many of you in the Catholic health care professions. It is, it must be a priority of mine to support you as you, in turn make great sacrifices to support our Church's teachings on the beginnings of life, respect for life at all stages, and the encouragement of traditional family life. . .