The Holy See

Care of the sick is a noble and an ennobling vocation, something more than a profession. It is your vocation, gentlemen, and that also explains your special interest in hospitals.

The French have a word for hospital, and We find it still in use in. your New Orleans. It is Hôtel-Dieu. What a beautiful connotation is found in that name! Hôtel-Dieu! Now God is charity. And the spirit that breathes in the halls and wards of a hospital should be charity: a love for God present in His. creatures, whose souls have been created to His own image and likeness. Hôtel-Dieu! The proferred hospitality of God. It was such charity that moved Our predecessor Innocent III back at the close of the twelfth century to establish the hospital that is still only a stone's throw away from this Vatican City, Rome's hospital of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love; and a like charity has laid their foundations, erected and sustains similar hospitals throughout the world.

Vast improvements have been made since the twelfth century and, We are pleased to note, are constantly being made in the facilities and service, the organization, administration and staffing of the modern hospitals. That is as it should be. Let research and progress in nursing and medical technology continue to move forward. We would only ask that doctors and nurses again and again remind themselves that their patient has a task to perform in human society and, that done, a rendezvous to keep with His God. The charity that fills their own lives and gives surpassing nobility to their vocation will make that easier for them.

With these few words of encouragement, gentlemen, and expressing Our paternal joy in receiving you, We are very happy to impart the Apostolic Blessing.

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