



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF POPE PAUL VI
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NEW ENGLAND OBSTETRICAL
AND GYNECOLOGICAL SOCIETY**

Saturday, 3 October 1964

We are happy to greet this distinguished group of members of the New England Obstetrical and Gynecological Society, and We salute with deference your important work in the delivery of new human life.

This personal meeting gives rise to thoughts of the delicacy, the gravity and the dignity of your profession, bound up, as it is, with the care and protection of human life at its biological fountain head, where it merges with that ontological fountain which springs forth from the creating hands of God. We render homage to your service to the good of mankind, during the secret and sacred phase of maternity, when Woman, the Mother, fulfils her highest mission, most deserving of reverence and care; and the seed of a new life is weakest and most in need of recognition and defense, and of help in attaining its natural fulness and perfection.

We are certain that the consciousness of your professional function will illuminate and guide your skilful medical art, and that, in the exercise of your practice, you will always recall the principles of ethics which Christian morals raise to their highest and most exigent expression, particularly when it is a matter of defending the life of each human being. You know that the voice of the Church, acting as interpreter of that Christian law, was heard in the teaching of Our Predecessor, Pope Pius the Twelfth, concerning a fundamental point, when he said: «Innocent human life, no matter in what condition it may be, is from the first instant of its existence, to be secure from every direct voluntary attack. This is a fundamental right of the human person... (and) this principle is valid for the life of the child, just as it is valid for the life of the mother» (Discorso 27 novembre 1951; *Discorsi e Radiomessaggi di Sua Santità Pio XII*, XIII, 415).

We are well aware of the greatness and complexity of the problems connected with these

principles; and We cherish the hope that your studies, your experience and your conscience, will be able to contribute to their proper application, for the good of mankind and the greater honour of your profession.

We praise the observance of divine commandments and of the law of nature in the difficult and vital practice of your profession; We invoke God's graces of enlightenment and strength upon your work; and to you and your fellow-physicians and families, We gladly impart Our Apostolic Blessing.