

M I S C E L L A N E O U S

THIRD CONGRESS OF THE NEUTRALITY OF MEDICINE

Organized by the Italian Association for the international Protection of Medicine and under the auspices of the International Committee of the Neutrality of Medicine, the IIIrd Congress was held in Rome from April 16 to 20.

Comprising some 130 participants from 34 different countries, with Professor Antonino Papaldo as President, the Congress adopted a certain number of resolutions which we will publish for documentary purposes in a subsequent issue.

The International Committee of the Red Cross was represented there by two observers, Mr. F. Siordet, Vice-President and Mr. J. Pictet, Director-General.

No less than 18 reports were submitted to the conference, amongst which there was a communication presented by the ICRC observers on disseminating the Geneva Conventions. We will subsequently return to this.

Members of the Congress were received in private audience by His Holiness Pope Paul VI who delivered a notable address which we now have the privilege of reproducing:

We are pleased to have been able to respond to your request for an audience and to receive you all here in Our abode, doctors and jurists who are taking part in the third international Congress of the Neutrality of Medicine. We welcome you wholeheartedly.

This Holy Week of Easter has seen the influx of great numbers of pilgrims to Rome unfortunately preventing Us from talking with you at length. All the same We praise all the concerted efforts you are making in the service of man, transcending differences of race, colour, nationality, political opinion or religious conviction. In this year devoted to Human Rights, We give you all encouragement most especially in having the international conventions more widely known and respected, since they protect amidst conflicts those who have chosen the noble mission of alleviating suffering, caring for and giving aid to their fellow beings, whether these are friends or enemies. Here, Gentlemen, are tasks which highly deserve and call for the active support of all men of goodwill.

The Catholic Church for its part encourages you most sincerely in your efforts, as it shares "all the joys, hopes, sorrows and anguish of man today", as the recent Oecumenical Council declared in its Gaudium and Spes pronouncement. There is so much sorrow in the world, such misery is lurking beside the fratricidal conflicts tearing mankind asunder. But if all men hope for harmonious progress and fellowship where war will be banished, who would not praise you for the tenacious efforts you are making at least to have the international conventions respected as well as the basic human rights amidst these struggles which never cease on our earth? You are thus working gradually to establish a kindlier world for all, this world on which we call down Our good wishes and prayers that justice, truth, freedom and goodness may reign.

The days you are spending in Rome will, We are certain, contribute towards this and We share this pleasure with you. It is therefore most warm-heartedly that We call on your work and on you yourselves in person an abundance of divine graces, as token of which We gladly grant you Our Apostolic Blessing.
