



# NORDISK FÖRENING FÖR KATOLSKA LÄKARE

## 2011 Annual Report from Nordic Association for Catholic Physicians (NFKL)

### Meetings

1. The first meeting was held at Johannesgården in Gothenburg March 18-19.

Johannesgården is owned by the Swedish catholic diocese. One of the main topics was an orientation about the latest in fertility techniques, especially by donation of eggs and surrogate motherhood (international surrogacy programs). In some respects there are similarities with rich people buying organs for transplantation from poor people in undeveloped countries. All these phenomena are controversial and associated with many ethical dilemmas not necessarily covered by international or canonical law.

However, the real main theme for that meeting was about hidden refugees and their position in health care in the Nordic countries. Georg Joseph, Secretary General Caritas Sweden, estimated that there are 10-15 000 such refugees in Sweden, and introduced several cases. This was followed by a presentation by the physician Sofia Olausson and the registered nurse Anna Sjögren from Rosengrenska stiftelsen and Red Cross Gothenburg. The situation in Norway was illustrated by physician and vice president Stein Nordahl.

Father Tomas Orylski s.j. introduced philosophical models developed by French philosophers after the second Vatican Council. Orylski holds a doctorate in this academic topic and is teaching at the Newman-institute in Uppsala. The Newman-institute is the embryo for the first catholic university in Sweden since the Reformation. Orylski holds also a position as the University Chaplain in Gothenburg.

The annual meeting is the highest decision-making body of NFKL and handled matters as defined by its Constitution during this weekend.

2. Next meeting was held in Oslo, Norway, December 2-4. Most participants were from Norway.

Britta Hjertaas from Franciskushjelpen, an NGO in Norway, told how 36 employed and 200 dedicated voluntary workers help individuals on society's margins, such as people without a home, drug addicts, prostitutes, people with risk for suicidal behavior, but also the terminally ill.

Professor (geriatrics) Torgeir Brun Wyller gave a presentation about the inherent values of life from conception to natural death, and the special needs of the elderly.

Gunnar Grøstad Johnson, General Practitioner (physician) from Vinje in Norway, gave a background to the rights in Norway to reservation in cases of ethical doubts. This is under debate despite the latest recommendations by the European Council. The Evangelical Lutheran society for physicians has the same position as Grøstad Johnson, and were presented by Morten Magelsen. Issues concerning secular and canonical law was developed by attorney Håkon Bleken who also is active in *Justitia et pax*. The theologian Helene Lund presented issues in the beginning of life, abortions and laws concerning bioethics and how also they are related to human rights. The proceedings ended with



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concluding remarks by physician Helene Fongen on how God is present in our daily work as physicians.

## External contacts

An article concerning NFKL based on an interview with Bengt Säfsten was published in Katolskt magasin (Sweden). Similar initiatives have been made by Grøstad Johnson (Norway).

There has been many contacts and interviews in different national media after the the resolution European Council about Conscientious Objection. Especially Gunnar Grøstad Johnson (Norway), Robert Paul (Finland) and Bengt Säfsten (Sweden) have been active.

NFKL member Paul Wollner participated in Brussels for the FEAMC-meeting on Human Fragility (Frailty). That meeting was conducted by the Board of FEAMC in collaboration with other institutions. It brought together experts in social sciences, economy and politics, medicine, and philosophy. From different countries people came to share their main interest to stand up for the vulnerable. This meeting was also in line with 2012 as European Year for active aging.

## Members

Especially in Norway there has been an influx of new members, often as a result of personal invitation.

## Plans for 2012

A delegation from NFKL will participate in Rome in November. Gunnar Grøstad Johnson will give a presentation about Conscientious Objection in the situation in Norway. A couple of weeks later a seminar about Health care and refugees will be held in Stockholm, Sweden, at the yearly national meeting for health care personnel including physicians.

Gothenburg, Sweden, March 2012

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