



DIOCESE OF FRESNO  
PASTORAL CENTER  
1550 NORTH FRESNO STREET  
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93703-3788  
TELEPHONE (559) 488-7400

March 20, 2006

Paul Braaton, MD  
P O Box 578036  
Modesto CA 95357

Dear Dr. Braaton,

Excuse me for the delay in responding to your letter of January 6, 2006. I have been conferring with different persons regarding your proposal.

I do thank you for the invitation to the inaugural conference of the Catholic Medical Association in Modesto May 5 to 7, 2006. This is at the height of my Confirmation season and there is no way I could attend.

I would have to have some ongoing dialogue with Bishop Blaire before responding to your request. There are concerns whether to have a Guild of the Catholic Medical Association in the Central Valley or in individual dioceses. The Central Valley is quite extensive in geography, especially if it would include the Dioceses of Stockton, Sacramento and Fresno. Merced is close to Modesto, but Fresno, Visalia and Bakersfield, the other three major towns in my Diocese, are quite distant. I have difficulty bringing professional people together within my own diocese because of the geographical distances. Because of this we have two separate Thomas More associations for attorneys, one in Bakersfield and one in Fresno.

Be assured of my prayers as you move forward in your plans.

In Christ, our Lord,

Most Reverend John T. Steinbock  
Bishop, Diocese of Fresno

JTS:mha

cc: Most Rev. Stephen E. Blaire, D.D.