**April 12th of this week** marked the anniversary of the death of Saint Joseph Moscati, an Italian physician, who dedicated his life to helping the sick and the poor, often giving *them* money along with their prescriptions, taking a vow of chastity so he could focus on this apostolate, helping countless patients, and was one of the first to experiment with newly-discovered insulin in the treatment of diabetes.

On this morning in 1920, he received Communion at Mass, went to see patients, sat down to rest in his office armchair, and never arose, dying peacefully.

Joseph Moscati was canonized by Pope Saint John Paul II on October 25, 1987.

Saint Moscati symbolizes the best way to do medicine, free, without seeking a comfortable living and a fat bank account, prestige and honour.

No so: A life hidden in a hospital, day in and day out. A simple quiet hidden life, but known quite well one would think to God and his patients.

Dr. Moscati could also teach the world a thing or two, not least the ‘service’ and ‘vocational’ aspect of medicine, in proximate danger of getting lost as offices across the country fill with people in medicine because it provides a rather lucrative career.

Yesterday, on the CBC, there was a report that a growing number of graduates from medical school cannot find residencies, which means they cannot become licensed physicians, and have to go back to school for a year, and try again, already in debt as much as a mortgage. There was talk of decreasing the number of medical students, or, yes again, increasing funding in health-care, already draining most of our economy.

One commentator gasped at the former option, decrying Canada’s lack of doctors’, but she cries wolf, for there is not: People seem unable to grasp the fundamental principle that if something is ‘free’, and desired, it will be abused. Physician’s offices and waiting rooms are filled with people are spiritually broken, the lonely, elderly, anxious, depressed, broken-hearted, fearful, those suffering the effects of an unrepented life of sin, which has both physical and spiritual consequences, either in our own lives or those around us, and whose ailments and sufferings cannot be healed by modern medicine, a point Pope John Paul II makes in his 1984 Letter on Suffering, *Salvifici Doloris*, wherein he discusses pain of

"*a spiritual nature...which accompanies both moral and physical suffering The vastness and the many forms of moral suffering are certainly no less in number than the forms of physical suffering. But at the same time, moral suffering seems as it were less identified and less reachable by therapy*.”

Indeed. Yet how many strive to ‘reach’ and heal such spiritual suffering by therapy, to mask it with a panoply of psychotropic drugs, or long sessions with very expensive psychiatrists, or, most often, both?

Then we have all the minor ailments that require not the specialized training of physicians, the colds, flus, headaches, cuts and bruises, all of which used to be cared for in the home, but who has a ‘home’ anymore, and how many live lives of quiet desperation, all alone, the elderly and shut-in, the abandoned and cast-off, for whom a trip to the doctor is their one excursion, and who will go as often as they are able?

We are quite literally drowning in debt in our province (see Paula Adamick’s take on the debacle caused by a decade-and-a-half of Liberal governance), while the medical system, draining untold millions of unproductive dollars from the economy, continues its own life of ‘quiet desperation’, as any trip to a doctor’s waiting room, if you can get on the list, or to an urban emergency room if you cannot, will evince.

As I have written before, the average salary of a physician in Ontario is close to $400,000 per annum. Since most of our graduates in the near future will be female, many of whom will enter the married state, with all that entails, how many of our physicians will be working in any sense considered ‘full-time’, to say nothing of the life-long dedication of Blessed Moscati?

What possible incentive would there be to do so, except either financial, or, dare I even suggest it, spiritual? The ‘average’ doctor, of whatever sex, could work one-quarter time, and still take home more income than the average Canadian, who is funding all of this. (if one considers paying yet-more debt ‘funding’)

But how many of our future physicians will be spiritually motivated, at least in any Christian sense of that term, as med-school applicants are carefully screened, probed and prodded for any even vestigial ‘pro-life’ views, to say nothing of even subtle anti-transgendered or homophobic tendencies? In fact, it is already the law that if current doctors refuse to formally cooperate in legally-sanctioned murder-suicide known as ‘euthanasia’, they can be charged and lose their government-sanctioned license. And woe to those who try to ‘cure’ a homosexual or properly counsel a troubled teen questioning his ‘gender’.

As the old traditional guard fade away, physicians who actually believed and lived the first principle to ‘do no harm’, like my dear Dad who retired a few years ago, they will be replaced by the functionaries of a State-mandated education, drones of our socialist system, highly-paid and technically proficient, perhaps, but spiritually bereft even, I would posit, evil. Oh, they will speak the language of compassion and a proper bedside manner, but what grinning skull lies behind the soft and gentle greeting?

Oh, for a few more medical Moscatis! And if, like him, patients were only aware of how much spiritual, psychological and even physical good can come from an regular and honest confession and reception of the Eucharist, the ‘medicine of immortality’, I dare say waiting rooms would have more room, and churches less.

As Dr. Moscati and Pope John Paul II, who canonized him, were well aware, we are body-soul composites, and the proper care of persons requires not only solicitude for both these aspects of our being, but also that what we can best give to others is our very self, without stint or compromise; and not primarily for financial gain, but for the kingdom of heaven, the only reward worth striving for.