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[Book Review of] *Psychiatric Ethics*, edited by Sidney Bloch and Paul Chodoff

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Martin admits that the Church often has been too tied to the status quo. Marxists are taking advantage of this fact to infiltrate and subvert the Church in Latin America and elsewhere. In America and western Europe, the Church's assimilation to the culture has paved the way for a counterfeit "Christian" humanism, which in reality comprises essentials of Christian faith and life. Martin tellingly describes the consequent decline in Catholic moral teaching and practice, especially in the field of sexual morality.

After diagnosing the crisis of truth in the Catholic Church, Martin turns to a plan of treatment. False optimism and theories which attempt to justify what has happened must be set aside. The Satanic, anti-Christian element in cultural movements must be recognized and identified clearly. All false teaching occurs under some pastoral authority. The bishops must pull themselves together, set aside excuses for inaction and compromise, and begin to exercise more vigorously their collegial responsibility in communion with the pope to carry out Vatican II's true program of renewal. Infidelity and negligence of responsibility have dire consequences and call for God's judgment.

Thus, Martin clearly points to the need for both individual and communal repentance in the Catholic Church. We must examine ourselves by the standard of God's word, commit ourselves to greater fidelity, seek forgiveness and the help — human and divine — necessary to do better. The fundamental and indispensable act of ours must be prayer for an increased gift of the Holy Spirit and humble reliance on His light and power. False irenicism, which accepts infidelity to avoid new divisions, must be set aside. This necessary step will be painful, but faithfulness to God is more important than a false appearance of Christian and ecclesial unity.

Martin is not a pessimist, although he firmly sets aside the false optimism and accommodation with masquerade as Christian joy and pastoral charity. Confident that Christ remains with the Church, Martin challenges every Catholic to follow Him more faithfully and enjoy the unfailing help of the Holy Spirit in doing so. I hope this book will be read and discussed and acted on by seminarians, teachers, religious, Catholic physicians, priests, bishops — indeed, by every mature Catholic.

— Germain Grisez

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Psychiatric Ethics

Sidney Bloch and Paul Chodoff, Editors

Oxford University Press, New York/Melbourne, 1981, 365 pp., \$29.50.

The temptation to play God confronts every professional who must deal with human beings. Invested with specialized knowledge, powers, and authority, the professional is faced with the opportunity to intervene in the lives of others in a manner which has profound ramifications. It is only with difficulty that the professional is able to accept the fact that his endowments are limited, often obscure, and not always infallible in their execution. In short, the professional must come to realize that his professional position does not exempt him from the status of all humans as they struggle to form themselves and their conduct in a manner most conducive to the well-being of all.

If the foregoing temptation has confronted priests, theologians, lawyers, and medical doctors in past ages, the psychiatric professionals in the course of their development as practitioners of a distinct science are now having their turn to confront the limitations of their science and ask basic questions about the extent of their prerogatives and the limitations of their responsibilities. The fact that psychiatrists themselves are now placing the two words, "psychiatric" and "ethics" in the same context indicates a growing awareness that their science, like any others, is to be subjected to a norm not determined solely by principles of its own.

Psychiatric Ethics is a collection of excellent articles whose authors confront the ethical issues which perplex conscientious psychiatrists as they traverse the razor's edge of professional patient care and the need to respect themselves and their clients as independent and responsible individuals. The need to explicate the assumed foundations of moral conduct among practicing psychiatrists as well as the application of these principles to current psychiatric problems illustrate the wide range of topics addressed in this book.

As with any book which deals with current, living issues, you will not find herein the final, definitive answers on the ethical issues now confronting those in the practice of psychiatry. What you will find, however, are issues clearly articulated, principles illustrated, and solutions suggested when individual cases of singular perplexity are to be resolved. As in any singular moral issue, as well as medical and psychiatric issues, the final decision must rest with the conscience of the individual practitioner, a conscience formed by the most enlightened information available from the most expert minds in the field of inquiry.

The individual practitioner can find in one place in this book the latest and the best thinking on ethical issues involved in diagnosis, drug treatment, psychotherapies of various kinds, psychosurgery, suicide, involuntary hospitalization, confidentiality, and the ever-present need to advance in knowledge and practical skill through research and experimentation, even with human subjects. Many of the conflicting issues confronting psychiatrists concerning their responsibilities to their patients and to society are explored, as well as the misuses to which psychiatry can be put to manipulate individuals and society into pre-determined patterns not altogether conducive to the well-being of either.

The book contains a topic index, and the excellent references at the end of each chapter provide ready access to the latest published materials on the subject under discussion. These will be valuable both to the psychiatrist faced with resolving conflicts in general practice as well as to the scholar who wishes to explore the deeper implications of the ethics of psychiatric practice on a more theoretical level. The value of the book is further enhanced by the collection in the appendix of all the codes of ethics which have been formulated by national and international organizations to guide the decisions of their members in the practical implementation of their professional services.

Psychiatric Ethics is not a book of the pop psychiatry vintage, but it should be valued by the serious practicing psychiatrist as a safe guide through the perplexing decisions which need to be made on a daily basis in bringing the most enlightened care to people suffering the varied agonies in the depths of their inner selves. This book is both an excellent summary of the current thinking in the field of psychiatric ethics and a challenge to the men and women who practice this profession to a deeper reflection upon themselves and their clients, so that the results of their services will both enhance the dignity and freedom of those clients as well as rebound to their own honor as members of the time-honored helping professions.

— Rev. Joseph H. Determan, O.P.
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