A Topical Index to Moral Problems of Medicine

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Who said to His Apostles, "You have not chosen Me but I have chosen you: and have appointed you that you should go and bring forth fruit and your fruit should remain." (Jo. 15:16)

It is not necessary for the doctor, anymore than for the priest, to have been given any special revelation, such as St. Paul received on the way to Damascus, in order to be "called." All that is necessary in both cases is that they have the proper qualifications, the desire, and the will to fulfill the requirements of their respective callings. The difference between such a vocation and a mere career lies in its motivation. A true vocation comes from God and its acceptance is based on the motive of love of God. It is true that this is more apparent in the priestly vocation because of the nature of the priest's life and work. However, it is not less true of any other vocation, particularly of that of the physician. For who approximates closer the function of the priest than the doctor? The priest (and often the doctor himself) generates through baptism new children of God: the doctor brings them into the world. The priest nurses their souls with the Bread of Life and heals their spiritual wounds in the sacrament of penance: the doctor performs similar functions with respect to their bodies. And, while the priest prepares the soul for its last journey, the physician does all in his power to make this transition as peaceful as possible.

Finally, while it has long been recognized that the physical condition of the body is often reflected in the soul, there are certain diseases of the mind that require more than drugs or surgery. The physician who knows not only his medicine but also his religion and what it has to offer to these suffering members of Christ's body, will really deserve to have on the Day of Judgment those words of Our Blessed Savior, "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of my least ones, ye did it unto Me. Come ye blessed of My Father."

Let me end with the significant words of St. Paul to the Corinthians (1, 1, 26) "See your vocation, brethren." You have within your power more than is given to most men to influence for good or for evil your fellow men. If you consider your profession a real call from God to cooperate with Him in creating and preserving human life, you will be as Christ once said of His disciples as it were "gods" and will deserve to be made sons of God and heirs of heaven.

Father Yancey is Chairman of the Department of Biology, Spring Hill College, Mobile, Alabama, and Moderator of the newly formed Catholic Physicians' Guild of Mobile. The above address was delivered at the Guild's first meeting.
STRUCTURE OF THE INDEX

Wherever possible, reference is first made to Fr. Kelly's Medico-Moral Problems. Several reasons urged this "prerogative of honor," among them the hope that no Catholic physician would be without these prescious books, oriented as they are on the Code of Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Hospitals, they offer from the wealth of the author's practical experience and theological acumen hard, straightforward, and trustworthy answers to the moral problems which commonly occur in medical practice. (The Code and four books of Medico-Moral Problems available for $2.00 a set. Order from The Catholic Hospital Association, 1438 So. Grand Blvd., St. Louis 4, Mo.) Wherever extant literature makes it feasible, they also contain convenient references to pertinent theological and medical source material, and a feature scarily to be despised they are priced within the range of even an intern's limited budget. It will frequently happen that a doctor's specific doubt in a given instance will find its ready solution, either expressly or by obvious analogy, in one or another volume of this series, abbreviated within the index as MMP, with the volume number and Roman numerals.

For comparable reasons LINACRE QUARTERLY (LQ) has attained second place in the hierarchy of reference matter. For over twenty years this periodical has admirably fulfilled its professed purpose of being "a journal of the philosophy and ethics of medical practice." Either through the medium of formal articles, or more recently in the additional form of trenchant "Medico-Moral Notes," scarcely an issue has appeared without practical and valuable expression of some ethical aspect of medical science. It would be hard to imagine a Catholic hospital without a standing subscription, or a Catholic doctor who would not include it as a "must" on his reading list. (Send subscriptions to LINACRE QUARTERLY, 1438 So. Grand Blvd., St. Louis 4, Mo. Yearly rate: $2.00.)

It is regrettable that the earlier numbers of this publication have apparently become something of a rarity. Fordham University in New York and of course the LINACRE QUARTERLY office in St. Louis are known to have the entire series, and doubtless some other Catholic libraries throughout the country have been as provident. (LINACRE would appreciate information as to the availability of collections for reference purposes.) All numbers, however, have been included in the index for the benefit of the comparative few who may have easy access to even the earlier issues.

It is not to the dishonor of Theological Studies (TS) that this quarter is relegated to third place among the reference material. Devoted primarily to speculative theological discussions, it usually lags to publications of more popular fields the task of providing solutions for practical moral problems. Consequently it is not the type of periodical that one would expect to find in the average doctor's library.

One prominent feature of Theological Studies, however, for which moralists have been universally grateful, is the annual survey of current moral theology inaugurated by John C. Ford, S.J. (FT), later continued by Gerald Kelly, S.J. (K), and most recently (1954) co-authored by both (K.F.). Almost from the beginning the survey has devoted considerable space to medico-moral questions, and has never failed to report most clearly and objectively on current differences of theological opinion, nor neglected to indicate the practical conclusions derived therefrom. Only rarely will it happen that a characteristically medical problem discussed within the survey will not also have received attention in the professionally medico-moral literature already mentioned. But the survey's special value in our present context would consist in the source material it offers for further research into the ethical aspects of medicine. Hence Theological Studies is included in the index. (Yearly subscription rate: $5.00 for the U.S., $5.50 for Canada; single copies may be obtained for $1.25. The business office is located at Woodstock, Md.)

Reverse chronological order (from the more to the less recent) has been observed whenever either LQ or TS offers more than a single discussion of one and the same question. In most cases that particular sequence of citation could scarcely be defended as anything more than a personal quirk; but in other instances it appears to have definite advantages, and hence for the sake of consistency that order has been observed throughout. In some moral questions there has occurred a certain evolution of doctrine, due either to recent developments of the Holy See which have put an end to legitimate disputes of the past, or to more exact medical data made available over the years, or to a better appreciation of that data on the part of theologians. Such problems, for example, as eutanasia, artificial insemination, rhythm, various indications for induced sterilization etc., must today be solved according to medical or theological evidence which was not always available. And yet for the historical purposes the older literature also has its place and importance and has been included in every instance.

**SOME SIGNIFICANT OMISSIONS**

Except in isolated cases, where adequate moral treatment of a topic is best available in book form, deliberate effort has been made to restrict
references to periodical literature of a professedly medico-moral nature. The average doctor cannot be expected to have acquired an extensive theological library; nor can most Catholic hospitals afford to finance more than a limited number of theological titles for general staff use. Furthermore, if such books should be provided either in the staff room or in the hospital library, it would be a coals-to-Newcastle project to re-index their contents. In some instances, however, books are cited and it must be left to the doctor’s discretion to determine whether the moral problem involved is of sufficient personal importance or interest to warrant acquisition of the title by purchase or library loan.

The omission of references to such familiar clergy publications as American Ecclesiastical Review, Homiletic and Pastoral Review, The Priest, etc. is in no sense intended as derogatory to those periodicals or to their contributors in matters moral. It is happily true that, although none of those periodicals is devoted exclusively to medical problems, they have frequently contained expressions of medico-moral doctrine which should be regarded with highest respect by any moralist worth the name. But the further fact remains that, wherever the situation warrants it, those very opinions, together with accurate references to their original sources, have been conscientiously incorporated into the professedly medical literature actually included in the index. Hence, expediency has again prevailed, this time to discourage the seeming needless multiplication of entities which would result from re-doing what the authors cited have already done.

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It is but repeating the obvious to state that no case book however ingenious, and a fortiori no mere index to the solution of moral cases, can ever supply for the absolutely essential requisite to consistent and correct moral judgments, viz. familiarity with and fidelity to basic moral principles. That latter obligation will always remain to a large extent the personal responsibility of the individual physician. And the purpose of this index will have been achieved if, to any notable degree, it facilitates his faithful discharge of that professional duty.

Additional copies of this Index are available at 25c each, from LINACRE QUARTERLY, 1438 So. Grand Blvd., St. Louis 4, Mo. Quantity quotations for 12 or more.