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# A Topical Index to Moral Problems of Medicine

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## FOREWORD

THE index which follows has been compiled primarily for physicians and for others whose professional duties bring them frequently into contact with medico-moral problems. In no sense of the word does it profess to be an exhaustive catalogue of the literature on the subject. Doctors ordinarily do not have extensive theological libraries at their disposal, nor do they enjoy the leisure to consult a great variety of sources. Hence, by the very practical consideration of the doctor's convenience, reference material has for the most part been restricted to the literature which is more readily available to the average Catholic physician.

Fortunately, however, that necessary restriction is no great handicap from either the medical or moral viewpoint. We are blessed here in America by having a number of eminent moralists who have devoted much of their time and exceptional talent to the medico-moral field, and who have written much on the subject in medically popular publications. Names such as Gerald Kelly, S.J., Charles J. McFadden, O.S.A., Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., John C. Ford, S.J., are by-words wherever Catholic medical men gather. Such men have earned the highest respect of doctors and theologians alike; and their writings alone provide a rich thesaurus of sound opinion on morality in matters medical. Hence it is by way of mere explanation, and in no sense apologetically, that admission is here made of the quantitative limitations of the index.

While theologians will find the bibliography far from adequate for many of their purposes, it is hoped that they will nevertheless find it at least a time-saving device in their more extensive research into problems of medical morality. And hospital chaplains will discover a few items which have been inserted precisely for their benefit, pertaining as they do to priestly functions rather than to the role of doctor.

### STRUCTURE OF THE INDEX

Wherever possible, reference is first made to Fr. Kelly's *Medico-Moral Problems*. Several reasons urged this "primacy of honor," among them the hope that no Catholic physician would be without these priceless booklets. Based 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 lucid, straightforward, and trustworthy answers to the moral problems which most commonly occur in medical practice. (The *Code* and four booklets 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 scarcely 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 in Roman numerals.

For comparable reasons LINACRE QUARTERLY (LQ) has been accorded 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 doubtlessly 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

eminent quarterly is relegated to third place among the reference material. Devoted primarily to speculative theological discussion, it usually leaves to publications of a more popular mold 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 perennial 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. (F), 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 professedly 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 is \$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 decisions 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 ectopics, artificial insemination, rhythm, various indications for indirect sterilization etc., must today be solved according to medical or theological evidence which was not always available. And yet for 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 worthy of 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 seemingly 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 consistently 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.*