

John M. Travaline and Louise A. Mitchell, editors, *Catholic Witness in Health Care: Practicing Medicine in Truth & Love*. Catholic University of America Press, 2017.

Ashley Fernandes, in his foreword to this wonderful book, describes *Catholic Witness in Health Care* as “the first-ever Catholic medical ethics textbook written by physicians, bioethicists, and theologians that is at once accessible to the learned lay person and also a tremendous resource for those who practice medicine, students of the health sciences, and philosophers and clergy who require a scholarly, practical guide to authentic Catholic medicine and ethics.” The editors have assembled twenty-seven contributors, most of whom are practicing physicians but who also include bioethicists, psychologists, theologians, a nurse, a pharmacist, and a medical student. Interspersed throughout the book are numerous clinical case studies and vignettes, as well as many other examples of real-life situations and experiences that challenge our conscience and our faith.

In part 1 (the first three chapters), the authors lay the foundations for authentic medical care, drawing on the Old and New Testaments, Church teaching, and the philosophical underpinning of Christian medical care.

They develop the principles of virtue, suffering, and the dignity of the human person as critical in the doctor-patient relationship in order to preserve and restore health. They introduce the Catholic vision of the profession of medicine through the parable of the Good Samaritan, which also influences chapters written by other health professionals. Peter Colosi presents “A Catholic Anthropology and Medical Ethics” by exploring the body-soul unity and the question of consciousness based on a question Pope Benedict XVI was asked by a mother on Good Friday, 2011: “Has the soul of my son who has been in a vegetative coma since Easter Sunday 2009, left his body, seeing that he is no longer conscious, or is it still near him?” Colosi thoroughly addresses the pope’s answer and its applications to contemporary moral issues such as euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide. The last chapter in part 1, entitled “Pastoral Care of the Sick and Dying,” is a comprehensive look at the new ritual “Order of the Anointing of the Sick,” addressing the ministers and forms of pastoral care of the dying. For those involved with day-to-day medical care of patients, this is an excellent chapter to prepare patients for their eventual final journey.

Part 2, “Witness in Practice: The Clinical Context,” comprises nine chapters. All these chapters are rich in practical examples, clinical cases, and vignettes. In chapter 4, “Reproductive Health and the Practice of Gynecology,” Kathleen Raviele offers moral alternatives for women’s health issues. She explains and promotes the importance of chastity, describes the serious complications of contraceptives, discusses ethical dilemmas such as genetic testing, the management of ectopic pregnancies, and lethal anomalies in the unborn baby, and explains induced abortion and its complications. Also covered are emergency contraception, treatment of endometriosis, and management of infertility including assisted reproductive technology. Richard Fehring, a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing, follows up in the next chapter, “Fertility Care Services,” with in-depth coverage of Natural Family Planning (NFP) including its history and scientific basis, types of NFP, its efficacy compared to contraceptive approaches, and, finally, benefits and bioethical issues that might arise with the practice of NFP.

Chapter 6, “Catholic Witness in Pediatrics,” can be recommended for not only health professionals and parents but also for clergy and youth ministers. The author, Christopher O’Hara, outlines his vision of how the Catholic pediatrician can help in a major way the formation of a child. He details a Catholic approach to parenting, addressing the stages in a child’s life from infancy to adolescence and covering such issues as the importance of preserving innocence in early childhood, a child’s diet, selection of books, the challenge of electronic media in early and later child

development, the importance of play and sports, and character formation and discipline. O'Hara discusses such issues as Human Papilloma Virus Vaccine, chastity and friendship, modesty in dress, chastity of the senses in speech and music, dating, pornography, sex education at home, risks of adolescent premarital sexual activity, creating a culture within the home, and substance abuse issues. Specific medical topics such as attention deficit disorder and vaccinations are also addressed.

In chapter 7, "Caring for Older Adults," the authors—both physicians—share important Catholic geriatric principles in the care of older adults. The authors review one's duty to parents, respect for the elderly, pain management/palliative care issues, sacramental care of the elderly, the role of nutrition and hydration, how to cope with dementia, advance care planning, the difference between proportionate and disproportionate care, and, finally, care for the dying so that it can be a grace-filled moment for all involved.

In chapter 8, "Catholic Perspectives on Caring for the Critically Ill," five physicians share their perspective and experiences working in intensive care units (ICU) in which one can witness to one's faith when encountering some common ethical issues such as withdrawing or withholding life-sustaining therapies, withdrawing therapy versus physician-assisted suicide (PAS) versus euthanasia. Also covered, especially useful for family members and care givers, are the states of unconsciousness: permanent versus unsure, brain death, coma, persistent vegetative state, minimally conscious state, use of assisted nutrition and hydration in the critical care areas, and finally the sacraments in the critical care setting. This chapter illustrates how the Catholic physician and the health care team have the opportunity to touch the lives of patients and families in ways that complement the medical care being provided in the ICU.

Leonard Rybak and Christopher Perro address "Challenges for Catholic Surgeons." They discuss ethical issues in surgery, including the importance of informed consent and some forms of organ donation. However, the two most challenging issues for Catholic surgeons today are transgender surgery and facial transplantation. Using case studies, the authors explain at length the procedures and risks involved in both cases. They draw on Church documents and teaching to outline the troubling ethical issues involved in each of these surgical procedures. It should be noted that, in June 2018 (after publication of this book), a CVS pharmacist in Arizona was fired for refusing to fill the prescription of a transgender woman seeking hormone medication. Transgender medications will soon be a new battleground for Christian pharmacists.

Next, Jose Santos outlines “A Spiritual Perspective in Rehabilitation Medicine,” explaining how the Catholic physician and the rehabilitation team can integrate a patient’s spirituality and faith practices while evaluating and treating patients with a disabling illness or injury. Santos examines the role of forgiveness and the practice of mortification in the recovery process and how one can witness in truth and love to his patients.

In the next chapter, psychologist Wanda Skowronska examines “Catholic Psychologists and the Spiritual Dimension,” describing the potential positive impact of the Catholic psychologist on her patient’s suffering, dealing with family breakdown issues, and addressing the effects of abortion grief and the role forgiveness plays in psychological healing. She draws from Robert Enright and his outline of the complexity of forgiveness in *The Psychology of Interpersonal Forgiveness* and from the story of Immaculée Ilibagiza, a young Catholic woman who survived the Rwandan genocide, to weave an immensely satisfying and accessible explanation of true forgiveness from a Catholic perspective.

The authors of the chapter describing “The Catholic Pharmacist” take us back to rediscover the history of pharmacy and the Catholic tradition and then describe the challenges today for Catholic pharmacists, who often find themselves on the frontline in the ongoing culture wars. The authors prompt the Catholic pharmacist to “first develop or deepen a relationship with Jesus Christ” because Catholic pharmacists, by being called to imitate Jesus Christ, will be better able to counsel and give a reason for hope to their patients. The Catholic pharmacist is called to act with conviction of conscience and the authors draw on the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and other Church documents to explain in detail a proper understanding of conscience formation as well as formal and material cooperation when pharmacists find themselves in compromising professional situations. One unexpected bonus to this chapter is the treatment of the influence of business on pharmacy and an excellent discussion of price gouging, just pricing of pharmaceuticals, and a living wage and its connection with justice. Catholic pharmacists can offer a reason for hope in a secular world that degrades faith.

Part 3, “Toward a Shifting Culture,” includes a chapter by an anonymous medical student who describes himself as being apprenticed to Christ, the Divine Physician. He draws upon the *Charter of Health Care Workers* as the foundational document to develop this theme for the formation of Catholic medical students. I highly recommend this chapter for any student contemplating a medical career or who currently is in medical school or a medical or surgical residency. Deacon William Williams, a physician and editor of *The Linacre Quarterly*, the journal of the Catholic

Medical Association, is the author of the chapter titled “Ethics in Clinical Research.” He reviews the history of clinical research, the development of clinical research ethical codes including the Nuremberg Code, the Declaration of Helsinki, the Belmont Report, and the development of the 2008 Catholic Guide for Ethical Clinical Research. (All these codes are attached as an appendix to this chapter.) The Catholic Guide for Ethical Clinical Research incorporates the basic principles of truth, respect of life, respect for the integrity of persons, generosity, and justice. Many specific examples of ethical issues are cited, with emphasis on embryonic stem-cell research.

The final chapter is “A Model of Catholic Care—The Casa.” The Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza was founded in 1956 in Italy by St. Pio of Pietrelcina, and the smaller Casa San Pio Medical Clinic, modeled after the original Casa, opened in 2011 to serve the poor and underserved of Appalachia in Kentucky. These are examples of a hospital and a clinic that Padre Pio wanted to develop as Homes for the Relief of Suffering and as model communities of Catholic Christian health delivery, faithful to the Church’s teachings. More recently (after this book went to press), the Catholic Diocese of Lansing, Michigan, in collaboration with Catholic Healthcare International (CHI), announced plans for the Casa USA campus, containing a Casa USA Hospital, a Faithful Catholic Medical School, and a Catholic Physician Practice Network, to be located in the town of Howell, Michigan.

This book in fact is much more than a medical ethics textbook: It treats controversial subjects and cultural issues spread across our mass media, entertainment, and social media, that are true ethical dilemmas and that will at one time or another touch the life of every Catholic man and woman in the pew, yet are rarely if ever heard discussed or even mentioned from our pulpits. Each chapter is well referenced and there is a very useful index at the end of the book. *Catholic Witness in Health Care* will help all Catholics, especially health care workers, better understand their faith and appreciate how authentic Catholic health care must address these cultural and ethical issues with compassion, truth, and love.

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