

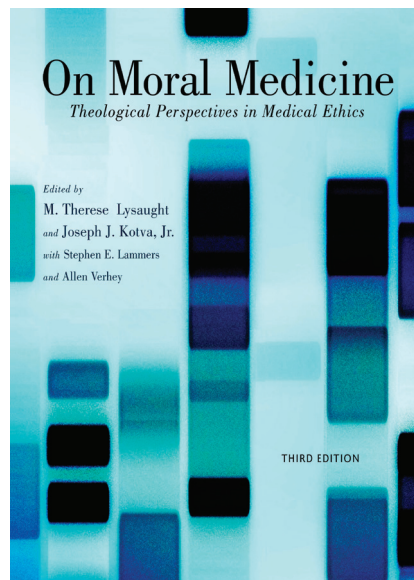
QUIBBLES ASIDE, SOURCEBOOK IS A TOUR DE FORCE

REVIEWED BY FR. RICHARD C. SPARKS, CSP, PH.D.

It's the BIGGEST book I've ever owned! It's an 8½- x 11-inch volume, 1,162 pages, almost two inches thick and it's a paperback. While \$70 is a hefty price, this third edition of the Lammers/Verhey bioethics anthology lives up to its well-earned reputation. This time around, Marquette University-based M. Therese Lysaught and Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary professor Joseph J. Kotva, Jr. have undertaken the editorship. With 93 new entries and 158 more pages, this encyclopedia-like resource is fully up to date, a worthy 2012 successor to its 1987 and 1998 incarnations.

As with the earlier editions, this is a comprehensive medical ethics anthology, perfect for the reference shelf of libraries, physicians, nurses, ethicists, chaplains and other scholars in the field. It should easily have a shelf life of a decade or more, as did the previous two editions. However, I think it is primarily meant to serve as the sole or at least primary textbook for health care ethics courses in medical schools, nursing programs, graduate and undergraduate courses, and even concentrated or long-term workshops, seminars and study groups. Given the rightful concerns about reprinting copyrighted material, the editors and the publisher have taken care of all those costs and worries for teachers and their students.

By contrast with the "rules" or "principles" basis of most texts in the field, the editors' emphasis in *On Moral Medicine* is decidedly theological or religious, especially the Christian perspective. Such classic authors in the field as Joseph Fletcher, Paul Ramsey, Richard A. McCormick, SJ, and Kevin D. O'Rourke, OP, are well represented. However, this third edition includes



ON MORAL MEDICINE: THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN MEDICAL ETHICS, THIRD EDITION

EDITED BY M. THERESE LYSAUGHT AND JOSEPH J. KOTVA JR. WITH STEPHEN E. LAMMERS AND ALLEN VERHEY

Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2012, 1,162 pages, \$70

more writings by women, persons of color and non-American contributors than prior editions, and places greater emphases on contemporary biblical theology, story or narrative ethics and what has come to be called "virtue ethics."

The volume is subdivided into six sections — Method; Christianity and Social Practice in Health Care; Patients and Professionals; Vulnerable Persons; The Beginning of Life; and The End of Life — with 23 chapters. A quick review of the table of contents reveals a broad spectrum of viewpoints, key groundbreaking articles and contributions by

the best and the brightest in the field of Christian ethics, particularly biomedical ethics.

Of course, the original editors, Stephen Lammers and Allen Verhey, as well as the new editors have included some prime examples of their own scholarly work. In recent years, Lysaught has become well known for her theological analysis related to contemporary issues. Kotva, a former Mennonite pastor, writes effectively here on virtue vis-à-vis abortion, about pastoral care and related chaplaincy issues.

My criticisms or suggestions lay more in the realm of minor quibbles or scholarly nitpicking. While it is the goal of any good anthology to be as comprehensive as possible, this volume — larger in overall size, page count, number of entries (and printed in double-columned pages to boot) — borders on being too big, too encyclopedic. If it were limited to 800-1,000 pages and its prior 7½- by 10-inch size, I think it would have been comprehensive enough, less costly and certainly more portable in backpacks or briefcases. One place where the editors might have cut is in the repetition of certain favored authors. If one article by McCormick or Fletcher is sufficient, then surely fewer entries from Lysaught, Kotva, Stanley Hauerwas, Lisa Sowle Cahill and William F. May would have sufficed.

That said, I do wish a few more church and denominational documents — Protestant as well as Catholic — had been included for seminary and denominational schools. Still, if this volume were used as the basic text, a good teacher could supplement the appropriate ecclesial documents for their own focus and tradition. Finally, it might be of greater use in middle-of-

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the-road to moderately progressive religious schools and programs. The presence of the more fundamentalist, evangelical and avowedly traditional scholars seems a bit light. Again, if used in a seminary or very doctrinal setting, teachers could supplement this volume with a few outside readings pertinent to one's own faith tradition.

On the back cover, David P. Gush-ee, Ph.D., director of Mercer University's Center for Theology and Public Life, Atlanta, says it better than I could: "*On Moral Medicine* is quite simply the single most authoritative sourcebook on Christian medical ethics in the English language today. Not just recommended — indispensable!"

I heartily agree. Congratulations to editors Lysaught and Kotva. You are worthy beneficiaries of and successors to the earlier work of Stephen Lammers and Allen Verhey.

Fr. RICHARD C. SPARKS, CSP, serves on the staff of Old St. Mary's Church in Chicago. He is the consulting ethicist for St. Anthony Hospital in Chicago. His best-known book, *Contemporary Christian Morality: Real Questions, Candid Responses*, continues to be a core classroom resource. He is the author of numerous articles on end-of-life issues as well as three recent *CareNotes* (Abbey Press) on palliative care and hospice choices.

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