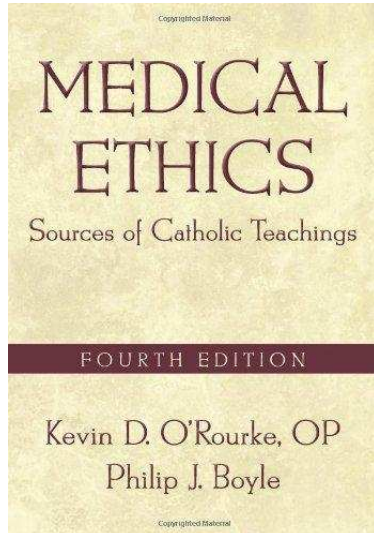


BOOK REVIEWS

MEDICAL ETHICS, SOURCES OF CATHOLIC TEACHINGS BY KEVIN D. O'ROURKE, OP AND PHILIP J. BOYLE

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY PRESS ISBN 978-1-58901-742-9 \$39.95 / £27.75



This has become a standard reference source for Catholic teachings on medical ethics and is now in its fourth edition. As the title suggests, it comprises largely of official Church teachings and writings by individual bishops and by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. As such, it is indispensable.

The first chapter is on the nature of persons and covers issues on health, sickness, death and sexuality. The next chapter is on normative concepts and includes informed consent, the Common Good and Double Effect reasoning.

The third chapter is on conscience. It is shown that conscience is not infallible and requires to be formed in accordance with truth. Mistakes can be made in formulating the principle, in understanding the facts and in reasoning from facts to a particular judgement.

The rest of the book covers a range of specific teachings and includes fundamental topics such as abortion, assisted suicide, brain death, cloning and terminal sedation. More subtle topics are also found, such as the dignity of the person, care for the poor and the treatment of rape victims. Thus in one book, a variety of sources of Catholic teachings are to be found. As the topics are in alphabetical order, they are easy to locate.

Although written for Catholics in health care, this work is a very helpful resource for all those interested in medical ethics.