

The Linacre Quarterly

Volume 58 | Number 1

Article 15

February 1991

[Book Review of] The Homosexual Person: New Thinking in Pastoral Care, by John F, Harvey, O.S.F.S.

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Recommended Citation

Mullooly, John P. (1991) "[Book Review of] The Homosexual Person: New Thinking in Pastoral Care, by John F, Harvey, O.S.F.S.," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 58: No. 1, Article 15.

Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol58/iss1/15>

It is as important an article as exists in the field of biomedicine. It explains what is involved in the notion of respect for persons, and defends as one of the paramount principles in biomedicine (or any other field) — “Do not act, or fail to act, in order that the patient [or any innocent human] might die.”

Brody's book has much to recommend it. This reviewer could not advise anything more helpful for clinical medicine than Brody's work supplemented by Stith's article.

—Gary Atkinson
Professor of Philosophy
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St. Paul, MN

The Homosexual Person: New Thinking in Pastoral Care

John F. Harvey, O.S.F.S.

Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 249 pp.

For the average citizen, homosexuality is a condition poorly understood, repellent, and confusing. For this reason, it is essential that this recently published book by Father Harvey be widely read by physicians, nurses, medically oriented persons, and religious. Laymen interested in this problem will also gain deep insights into the many individuals afflicted with this disorder.

John Harvey is a moral theologian and psychologist who has devoted more than 34 years to studying, researching and counseling. He brings deep insight to this field of homosexuality.

In this book, Father Harvey grounds his observations on the sound foundation of the magisterial teaching of the Catholic Church and integrates medical, psychological and psychiatric research into the various chapters.

In the first chapter, he discusses at length the definitions of homosexuality and the distinctions between homosexual activity and orientation, compulsive and non-compulsive activity. In Chapter 2, he reviews the more recent theories concerning the origins of homosexuality. In Chapter 5, he deals with the major dissenting theological views of Charles Curran, Philip Keane, John McNeil and Gregory Baum. Following up on this is an excellent section elucidating the argument from revelation and reason in favor of the official teaching of the Church.

Chapter 7 is, perhaps, the most practical section of this book, as Harvey presents pastoral perspectives and programs for those afflicted by this disorder. This chapter describes one-to-one counseling and its relationship to group therapy and group spiritual direction. This is an especially strong chapter. It gives hope to all that they can lead deep spiritual, chaste lives. Relying heavily on spiritual and psychological counseling, following the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, many homosexuals have been freed from the tyranny of their own condition and gone on to live chaste and integrated lives. For special criticism, Harvey points out the deficiencies of Dignity and New Ways Ministry, organizations of dissenting Catholics.

In Chapter 8, he deals with the problems of the married homosexual, the apparent adolescent homosexual and AIDS. His ninth chapter is devoted to psychological and pastoral reflections on pedophilia and its treatment, along with the ethical aspects of the treatment. The final chapter is a capsule summary of the entire book in which he succinctly states his conclusions.

This is a book which deals with homosexuality, its origins and treatment. For those who are involved in this field, it is "must" reading. The book reaffirms in the most practical fashion, the wisdom and integration of the Church's traditional teaching and its applicability to a most difficult medical syndrome.

—John P. Mullooly, M.D.
Medical College of Wisconsin

Ethics in Nursing Practice: Basic Principles and Their Application

F. J. Fitzpatrick

The Linacre Center, London, 1988. 290+xii. £9.95

"Divide only to unite" is a philosophical maxim which describes any kind of analysis. One takes something apart in order to understand how the parts work together as a whole. This maxim describes the movement of Fitzpatrick's fine volume on ethics for nurses. First, the author locates a critically important yet widely neglected field of study: the crossroads of nurses' training and ethics. Standard texts on medical ethics have heretofore been addressed to the mixed audience of pre-medical students and nurses. Fitzpatrick's introductory thesis, however, is that nursing ethics is somewhat distinct from ethics for physicians, especially today with high-tech nursing on the one hand and with home care nursing on the other.

Once the target audience is specified, he begins in Chapter 1 with the analysis of the nursing profession, the role and responsibility of nurses. The question of the nurse's identity is immediately raised by analysis of a *moral* problem: telling patients the truth. "Many moral problems arising in nursing, can be intelligently handled only if one has first determined what the proper role of the nurse consists in." (p. 3). Is the nurse one who primarily carries out doctor's orders or one who is primarily concerned to protect and enhance the well-being and dignity of each person in her care? Is the nurse's primary responsibility to the physician or to the patient?

Once the identity question is on the table, Chapter 2 is an analysis of various professional codes of conduct formulated in the UK and Canada. The point here is to demonstrate a code's inability to answer specific moral questions that arise in nursing. Beyond legal constraint and exhortation, there are questions which are properly philosophical. The competence and distinctive contribution of philosophy regarding meaning in life and in one's actions are analyzed in Chapter 3.

Chapters 4-6 deal with the nuts and bolts of philosophical ethics. Fitzpatrick maintains that the essence of real basic moral disagreement is over the acceptance or rejection of basic moral principles as *true*. "Is there an objective moral order or is morality a matter of personal taste, like art and literature?" is a basic question. Fitzpatrick argues very competently and thoroughly for an objective moral order. He clearly shows how moral "pluralism" inexorably leads to the absurd conviction that one can have no convictions. (p. 59). He offers a lucid, yet not simplistic presentation and critique of emotivism and utilitarianism. The most telling argument against the latter is that it makes morally obligatory what is generally held to be immoral. (p. 89).

Fitzpatrick's negative assessment of the contemporary, largely Anglo-Saxon methodologies of emotivism and utilitarianism lead to his proposition of a moral theory which posits an objective moral order. The author adopts the broader strokes of what he calls the "absolute respect" theory of J. Finnis, G. Grisez, W. E. May and J. Boyle. He presents a very lucid outline of this theory on pp. 100ff. Again, his presentation is simple without being simplistic.