

what has generally been portrayed. It is suggested that Mendel, coming from a simple rural background, was an unlikely candidate for religious or priestly life because of limited pastoral interest and gifts.

Nevertheless he managed to find the right niche for himself in a religious order with several apostolic options available to its members and a history of support for imaginative scholarship among its monks. He benefited similarly from the gracious vision of an abbot who understood the Catholic theological tradition as incorporating an incarnational vision that saw no dichotomy between faith and reason, between contemplating God *in se* and contemplating God *in creatio*. Whether Henig was aware of it or not, the heroes of her treatise are the Augustinian Community with its particular tradition and the abbot, Cyril Napp, of St. Thomas Monastery in Brunn, who interpreted that tradition so favorably in support of his monks and their scholarly pursuits. While most of Mendel's personal papers were destroyed after his death, the author uses what facts of Mendel's personal life and the history of the monastery remain along with the few scientific notes of Mendel that have survived to produce an engaging and interesting narrative of Mendel's life and his monastery.

The second part of the book begins where Mendel's life ends. It follows the development of the recovery of Mendel's hypothesis of "units of heredity" (the term *genetics* was not yet invented) by the scientific community at the beginning of the twentieth century. This story, unlike the biography of Mendel himself, is widely available, albeit in differing forms, and is well known by the scientific community. Henig includes it because her real goal, according to the subtitle, is to trace *the lost and found genius of Gregor Mendel*. I believe that readers with little or no background in science in general or genetics in particular will respond in one of two ways to this section: either they will find it too scientifically detailed and therefore tedious, or they will find that it introduces them to the world of genetics and makes the contemporary interest in DNA more accessible. I found this section to be accurate and am hopeful that

theologians and moralists with little or no scientific background will find it useful in providing a proper foundation to further reading in contemporary genetics and the moral issues that surround the field.

I found the book engaging. It has put a more human face on Mendel for me, and for that I am grateful. For the bioethicist, there is no real moral assessment of the genetic project, but the book clearly did not intend to provide one. Therefore, I believe its greatest value to the community of bioethicists and moral theologians is that it provides a reliable human picture of a monk and scientist and an accurate account of the progress of his research, from experiments to publication to the foundation of the commonly accepted paradigm of genetic science.

Richard Benson, C.M.  
Vice Rector and Academic Dean  
Professor of Moral Theology  
St. John's Seminary  
Camarillo, CA

**Keenan, S.J., James F., ed. *Catholic Ethicists on HIV/AIDS Prevention*. New York and London: Continuum Press, 2000. 272 pp.**

The genesis of this book was the perceived conflict between certain traditional positions espoused by Church personnel and the relatively effective HIV/AIDS measures promoted by not a few Catholic healthcare workers involved in the treatment of the epidemic worldwide. It is the contention of the editor, Father James F. Keenan, S.J., a Professor of Moral Theology at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, assisted by Father Jon Fuller, S.J., M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine at Boston University School of Medicine, Lisa Sowle Cahill, and Kevin Kelly, that this perceived conflict can be resolved by an appeal to a radically traditional use of the method of casuistry (a method which Jesuits have historically promoted within the field of moral theology).

The introduction by Keenan provides a succinct summary of what is being attempted

throughout the work. An underlying theme, which is also promoted by Keenan outside of this present book, is that Catholic moral theologians have argued convincingly that the promotion of preventive methods to deal with the HIV/AIDS epidemic such as condoms and needle exchange programs are morally licit. The authors argue that, far from being a radical departure from Catholic principles, the casuistic method applied throughout the moral analysis in this work is indeed quite traditional.

The book is divided into two basic parts. Part One, entitled simply "The Cases," provides a rather fascinating worldwide view of individuals and cultures dealing with the social, cultural, and ecclesial problems and marginalization experienced by both those who are infected by the HIV virus and those who attempt to serve them. Each of the twenty-six articles in this section attempts to reflect upon the creative interchange of principles and problems when the Catholic community attempts to assist those involved in the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Keenan posits that there are five themes which thread through this section and provide its unity. First, women do not have adequate power to confront the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Second, religious scrupulosity in no small way inhibits much effective prevention work. Third, the integrity of moral traditions which existed prior to Christian evangelization still exists today and needs to be respected by those working with indigenous peoples. Fourth, homophobia remains a major problem which cuts across cultures and churches. Finally, the dimension of protecting children against the HIV/AIDS virus is extremely complex.

The essays in Part Two of the work were specifically commissioned by the editorial board for this volume. They deal with fundamental moral issues in HIV/AIDS prevention. Underlying each of the articles is the belief that there has been a profound development in the Catholic moral tradition as the Catholic community has tried to assist both the patient and the care giver confront the epidemic of HIV/AIDS. Two particularly interesting articles in this section are *Casuistry and*

*AIDS: A Reflection on the Catholic Tradition* by Odozor and *From Responsible to Meaningful Sexuality: An Ethics of Growth as an Ethics of Mercy for Young People in This Era of AIDS* by Burggraave. Odozor in particular argues for the rehabilitation of the traditional method of casuistry as a way for the Catholic community to confront the application of its long-held principles to new and complicated issues in medical and global ethics.

While many of the articles contained in this work are a fascinating read, it is somewhat of a theological stretch to conclude that each particular application of the moral principles contained in this work are always fully consonant with magisterial teaching. In particular, the underlying theme promoted by the editors that the use of condoms and needle exchange programs are a morally licit way of confronting the HIV/AIDS epidemic is quite problematic. An issue of fundamental moral theology which is not addressed at any length in this work is the constant teaching of the Church that contraceptive intercourse is an intrinsically disordered action. An intrinsically disordered action has certain structural defects involved in the act itself which render it always and everywhere disordered, all things being equal. One can get the impression that Keenan is simply acting as a "spin doctor" for the position of moral permissibility of condom use in HIV/AIDS prevention. Simply declaring it to be so and using words like "faithful to the tradition," "traditional approach," and "conservative approach" do not make it so. Indeed, recently Keenan was publicly corrected by several Brazilian bishops for misreporting that they supported the use of condoms to prevent AIDS.

Similarly, when Keenan suggested in a recent article in *America* magazine that an article in *L'Osservatore Romano* by Monsignor Jacques Suaudeau, a member of the Pontifical Council for the Family, gave a "tolerant signal" regarding the use of condoms, Monsignor Suaudeau responded by stating that Keenan's article was simply a "pretext to relaunch the argument" about condoms. He contended that Keenan's article was a manipulation "blown up and exaggerated."

In sum, for those not easily swayed by occasional theological wishful thinking, this book is an informative collection of articles which provides a useful snapshot of Catholic efforts to deal with this terrible epidemic in a compassionate way.

Msgr. Steven P. Rohlf's  
Vicar General and Chancellor  
Archdiocese of Peoria, Illinois

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**May, William E.** *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life.* Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Press, 2000. 340 pp.

William May's *Catholic Bioethics* is first and foremost a theological text. From the start, he makes it clear that moral decision making in bioethics within the Catholic tradition must be grounded in God and his relationship to man. Chapter One lays the foundations with a discussion of four important magisterial documents, *Evangelium vitae*, *Donum vitae*, and the two declarations *On Procured Abortion* and *On Euthanasia*. All four proclaim that the Christian message concerning life is based not primarily on philosophical propositions but on Christ, the Word of Life (1 Jn 1:1). Man can only understand himself in light of the Lord, and as the book makes evident, many of the errors in contemporary bioethics stem from a flawed anthropology. Even human acts, the subject of Chapter Two, have existential and religious significance because each choice involves a decision ultimately for or against God. Catholic bioethics in many ways is a biotheology.

The remainder of the book discusses many of the "hot" topics in contemporary bioethical discourse. Chapter Three deals with marriage and the new reproductive technologies. May focuses on the three key distinctions which must be kept in mind when one determines the moral specification of various reproductive acts. He distinguishes between genital and marital acts, between making and begetting a child, and between replacing and assisting the marital act.

Here and in the rest of his book, May clearly describes the Church's position on many issues. If an official determination has not yet been made, however, he presents all the sides of the debate. For example, only after discussing the pros and cons of rescuing frozen embryos proposed by other authors does he make the compelling argument that the woman who seeks to rescue a frozen embryo can do so licitly, since the moral object of the act is to give the embryo a home. This then commits her to providing the womb this child needs in early development.

Chapters Four and Five deal with contraception and abortion respectively, two issues which are controversial because of a confusion over personhood. Contraception is falsely justified by a dualistic understanding of personhood where the body is an instrument to be used, a good *for* rather than *of* the individual. Abortion sees personhood not as something intrinsic to the individual but as something acquired during development. These mistaken accounts of the human person have led to erroneous bioethical decisions.

Chapter Six deals with experimentation on human subjects, especially the unborn. The key principle here is the necessity of the subject's free and informed consent. May clearly points out that the norm given by Catholic teaching is that nontherapeutic experimentation or research on the unborn is utterly immoral. It is only in this context that one can evaluate the morality of gene therapy, genetic screening, and genetic counseling. All must acknowledge and respect the dignity of the human person.

Finally, the last two chapters deal with end-of-life issues. Again, anthropology is at the heart of the debate. The "ethics of euthanasia" described in Chapter Seven rests on the false principle of ultimate autonomy of the individual. In contrast, an "ethics of benemortasia," grounded in Christian anthropology, recognizes that man has a place in God's providential plan in communion with others and so is only a steward of his very being. In the final chapter dealing with defining death, May describes the position of