

To provide the foundational justification for such a broad moral vision for our country, Bernardin called for clarity on basic distinctions, such as the difference between public and private morality, the difference between separation of church and state and denial of participation by the church in the development of public policy, the distinction between secularity and secularism. He often referred to the thought of the American theologian John Courtney Murray, S.J., whose work made possible the *Declaration on Religious Liberty* of Vatican Council II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, and whose moral theology underlies much of recent Catholic social justice teaching. Father Murray's work, however, preceded some of the foremost present-day American moral issues, such as the legality of abortion on demand, and contemporary conditions, such as the active presence of the Religious Right (40–41).

The world today is different from the world in which the addresses in *A Moral Vision for America* were delivered. The increased threat of terrorism following the September 11, 2001, attack on the United States of America and the scandals which have rent the American Catholic Church in 2002 have made the problems discussed more difficult to confront and resolve. The rise of terrorism has made questions of individual rights vs. the common good more burdensome. Technology almost daily makes life more complicated. New developments in genetics, stem cell research, and in reproductive technology raise new questions almost continually. Addressing these issues will require application of the principles set forth in this book in new, often more sophisticated, situations.

The difficult task of working out a consensus on life issues presupposes conditions of civility and the willingness to engage in dialogue. The final selection in this book is a statement on the Catholic Common Ground Project. It was Cardinal Bernardin's hope that American Catholics, as members of the largest religious group in the world's only superpower, would through their faith and their active citizenship help to create a new moral order. The spirit of community and charity called for in this final section will be needed

to create the moral vision required in the world Catholic Americans are called to live in today.

This book should be valuable to both the bioethics community and the general reader. It offers the invitation to reflect on the foundations of public morality so that they may be applied to rapidly changing situations in a world full of new and more complex challenges. This book is to some degree abstract; it does not relate detailed "cases." But the principles and the spirit of community that permeate these pages can provide the basis for ways to work through the difficult concrete life-issue problems that future days will bring.

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Burke, Theresa, with David C. Reardon. *Forbidden Grief: The Unspoken Pain of Abortion*. Springfield, IL: Acorn Books, 2002. 328 pp. Index.

At a recent discussion of moral issues in health care, one woman who had personal experience with abortion left the room when the group discussed abortion, and another, who was normally talkative, sat silently. The latter told me during a break that she had recently had an abortion and found listening to the group conversation emotionally draining. For anyone who knowingly or unknowingly discusses abortion with those who have personal experience with abortion, *Forbidden Grief: The Unspoken Pain of Abortion* is a valuable book to read. Theresa Burke's goal is to "provide both insight into postabortion reactions and an explanation of the symptoms that may develop when mourning is inhibited and feelings are repressed" (xx).

Beginning with a story that reflects the way in which ignorance and denial regarding abortion's consequences are prevalent in the United States, chapter one draws attention to the fact that not only is giving birth a life-changing event but so too is abortion, and women should be told about the mental health risks of abortion. Chapters two and three examine reasons for the ignorance and denial of postabortion issues. Chapter two examines a number of inaccurate assumptions, including 1) because abortion is legal, it must be safe; and 2) because the majority of women experience relief immediately after an abortion, abortion must be "no big deal." Abortion clinics reinforce these assumptions because women who have suffered physical injury from an abortion are unlikely to return to the same doctor for assistance, and abortion clinics are more likely to hear about the immediate relief that many experience than about the experiences of grief that often emerge later. In light of this, Burke states, "My goal is simply to show that a wide variety of emotional problems can result from abortion. These problems are generally ignored by both society and health care professionals, to the detriment of millions of women" (39).

In chapter three, Burke examines internal obstacles to working through postabortion grief, such as the desire to avoid negative feelings, the belief that one is not entitled to grieve over a past abortion, the belief that one should bear one's pain alone, and the desire to repent of the abortion by holding onto the grief. After examining the internal obstacles, she examines external obstacles to the grief process, including the lack of people willing to listen to the stories of women who have had abortions. She suggests that one part of the problem is that those who have compromised their moral positions to respect a "woman's right to choose" are not in a position to hear about the pain that abortion has caused a woman. A second part of the problem is that pro-choice advocates often see acknowledgement of the pain of abortion as detrimental to their political position. A third part of the problem that Burke identifies is "[o]nce a counselor has encouraged

or approved of an abortion for patient A, he may become 'invested' in defending abortion. If he subsequently allows Patient B to delve into her postabortion grief and associated pathologies, then the counselor may be forced to question his advice to Patient A" (61).

In this first part of the book, Burke identifies a couple of ethical problems with the theory that information about the risks of abortion should be withheld in order to reduce the likelihood of a woman experiencing emotional problems after abortion. First, this approach violates the woman's right to give informed consent. Second, "if low expectations are a risk factor for more negative reactions, the proper solution is not to withhold information and encourage falsely optimistic expectations. The ethical obligation of health care workers is to screen for this risk factor, provide additional counseling, and if it becomes clear that the woman's low expectations arise from the fact that abortion violates her own needs or desires, to assist her in resolving the problems surrounding the pregnancy so she no longer feels 'forced' into an unwanted abortion" (43).

The first part of the book will be of particular interest to those studying various aspects of the bioethical issue of abortion. In the remaining chapters of the book, Burke provides a psychological analysis of a variety of postabortion reactions, which will be of interest not only to a general audience but also to health care workers in particular. These chapters provide illumination for interactions one might have with a woman encountering postabortion issues. The final chapter is addressed specifically to those who are seeking healing after an abortion and encourages them to move forward in the grieving process.

In Appendix A, Burke states, "It should be noted, however, that the postabortion movement is unique and separate from the pro-life movement. While pro-life groups have promoted awareness of postabortion syndrome as another argument against abortion, they have typically treated it as simply a secondary argument against abortion" (275). While the postabortion movement and the pro-life

movement are clearly distinct, one might question whether they are truly separate. From the perspective of the teaching of the U.S. Catholic bishops on abortion (e.g., "Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Campaign in Support of Life," 2001), post-abortion reactions are not simply a secondary argument against abortion but are problems that call for a pastoral response by the Church. In addition, an important segment of the pro-life movement responds to women in crisis pregnancies, which include postabortive women who conceived a "replacement."

In this book, Burke integrates scholarly sources and clinical experience in a balanced way on a very controversial issue. I highly recommend this book for those interested in learning more about the psychology of postabortion reactions.

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Gómez-Lobo, Alfonso. *Morality and the Human Goods: An Introduction to Natural Law Ethics*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002. 142 + xvii pp. Index.

This short textbook is an excellent introduction to the approach in moral philosophy taken by, among others, John Finnis. Using fine examples and a clear style, Gómez-Lobo has written a text that is accessible to college students and older high school students. He patiently and probingly stimulates the sort of reflection that such students should learn to undertake as they begin to think philosophically.

Gómez-Lobo begins with the story of Socrates demanding an explanation of why he should escape from the penalty of capital punishment (that has been wrongly imposed on him). Socrates will be persuaded only by

sound, impartial, and universal reasoning. That, it is asserted, is the nature of ethical reasoning.

With this case in mind, Gómez-Lobo presents a moral theory whose basic outline will be familiar to most scholars. He introduces students to the first formal practical principle, that is, one should do good and avoid evil. He then offers brief arguments for seven supplementary principles. These are the basic human goods, namely, life, family, friendship, work/play, experience of beauty, both practical and theoretical knowledge, and integrity. Curiously, Gómez-Lobo excludes religion as a basic good, since, he thinks, only a complicated metaphysical proof for the existence of God or a nonphilosophical faith can ground religion. Because these avenues are not accessible to everyone, religion, he argues, cannot be a basic human good.

Gómez-Lobo also excludes from the basic goods several other goods that he considers only ancillary, namely, external goods, goods of fortune, freedom, dignity, and pleasure. He recognizes that modern philosophy raised up freedom, dignity, and pleasure as basic goods, but he is unpersuaded that they have anything to offer to fundamental natural law theory. Gómez-Lobo holds that, in the abstract, the basic goods are good without exception. They are also intelligible, constitutive of a good life, incommensurable, and nonhierarchical (though Gómez-Lobo does admit some prudential comparisons of goods). Pursuing the basic goods requires vigilance, commitment, inclusiveness, detachment, impartiality, care, and respect. The last two are, he thinks, equivalent to an expanded beneficence and nonmaleficence.

Next, Gómez-Lobo sketches the tricky nature of "actions," including intentions, consequences, and multiple causes. He then turns to moral norms as ways of judging human actions. Since these norms should promote and protect the basic goods, he gives an indication of the applicability of each of the seven basic goods to areas in our common moral life. On the topics of exceptionless norms and of conflict between norms, Gómez-Lobo inclines to say that there cannot be conflict among basic negative