

**PASTORAL MEDICINE:
A HANDBOOK FOR THE
CATHOLIC CLERGY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649171460

Pastoral medicine: a handbook for the Catholic clergy by Alexander E. Sanford

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ALEXANDER E. SANFORD

**PASTORAL MEDICINE:
A HANDBOOK FOR THE
CATHOLIC CLERGY**

Pastoral Medicine

*A Handbook for the
Catholic Clergy*

By

ALEXANDER E. SANFORD, M.D.



NEW YORK
JOSEPH F. WAGNER

Nihil Obstat

REMIGIUS LAFORT, S.T.L.,

Censor Librorum

Imprimatur

✠ JOANNES M. FARLEY, D.D.,

Archiepiscopus

NEW YORK, October 13, 1904

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INTRODUCTION.

THE purpose of Pastoral Medicine is to present to the practical theologian facts of physical science, as developed by the medical profession, for the purpose of applying them in pastoral functions and in explanation and support of the teachings of faith and morals. Pastoral Medicine has for its object the treatment of some branches of the scope of pastoral labors, which, as a rule, are but sparingly, if at all, included in the clerical student's plan of studies.

In the intimate connection between body and soul, it seems necessary that the clergyman should have some knowledge of the conditions of the body, if he wishes to fill with best results the office of administrator to the soul. He requires this knowledge, furthermore, for the purpose of applying it to the proper care of his own body, and also to enable him to render judicious advice and practical assistance in cases of serious accident, when he may be on hand before the physician, and to offer counsel in the rational treatment of sickness where, in cases of emergency, a medical man is not immediately at hand. There must, therefore, be numerous instances when the knowledge gained from a course in Pastoral Medicine will be applicable to best advantage.

Anthropology is a science of modern times. It teaches the history of man, his origin and his place among living beings, the structure and functions of his body. The theologian, for the reasons referred to, is bound to be interested in the results of this field of research.

The relationship existing between medicine and theology also exists between the former and the science of law. When applied to jurisprudence, medicine teaches the aspect and influence of medical and physical facts for

the purpose of the administration of justice. In both instances medicine stands in the position of an auxiliary science. Medicine does not undertake to render a verdict in judicial matters, and Pastoral Medicine does not decide in points of faith and morals. Its task is merely to furnish *material* for the formation of a correct judgment. Nor has Pastoral Medicine anything to do with the healing of diseases as practised by the medical profession, though undoubtedly it may greatly help in the prevention of sickness and in establishing of proper hygienic conditions for the welfare of mankind.

The priest is, to a considerable degree, the teacher of the people. The people, as experience teaches, turn often to the priest for help and advice, not only in matters ecclesiastical, but also in questions of physical welfare.

To be able to give the advice proper in such instances the priest should be familiar, at least, with the fundamental principles of *hygiene*. The objection may be raised that hygiene does not properly belong to the scope of Pastoral Medicine, and that the necessary knowledge in this field might be obtained from popular scientific works. If this be true, it is also true that works of this kind are not always readily accessible, and that for various reasons the young ecclesiastic can not be expected to take up extensively this field of study.

In this country, moreover, some knowledge of hygiene is almost indispensable for the priest, who, for instance, is likely to be called upon to arrange for the building of a school, church, or other public edifice, with proper regard for hygienic conditions.

When treating of any branch of science or art we inquire into its development; its history. The development of Pastoral Medicine, in the sense as it is taken in this book, is of modern date. The connection between the

clerical and medical professions, however, is as old as the history of man.

Health is the highest of worldly possessions. It is, therefore, not surprising that mankind, when deprived of this possession, have at all times endeavored to regain health by all known and available means. In ancient times, when sickness was considered solely in the light of punishment from the deity, the priest, as mediator between the deity and the mortals, was called upon to combat the affliction by prayers, sacrifices, and conjurations. But soon the treatment of physical ills was made a profession and physicians appeared upon the scene. Among the Egyptians, the oldest civilized nation, the science of medicine was very early developed by their priests. Physicians were not allowed to depart from established methods of treatment. Each form of sickness had its special physicians. "Medical science with them," says Herodotus, "meant a physician was a healer only of one particular form of ailment and not for others, and there were plenty, and for all kinds of diseases. They had physicians for the eyes, for the head, for the teeth, for the stomach, and for other diseases." Egyptian physicians gained considerable reputation not only at home, but also in foreign countries, until the physicians of Greece proved to be their superiors. The most renowned among Greek physicians was Hippocrates, 460-364 B. C. It was he who first taught the observation of nature, the study and examination of the sick person. He also wrote books on medical and hygienic subjects. Soon after him philosophy regained the upper hand and medicine walked hand in hand with the systems and theories of the philosophers. Finally the science of medicine sank so low that in Greece as well as in Rome its practice was left to slaves.

We must linger for a moment with the Israelites.