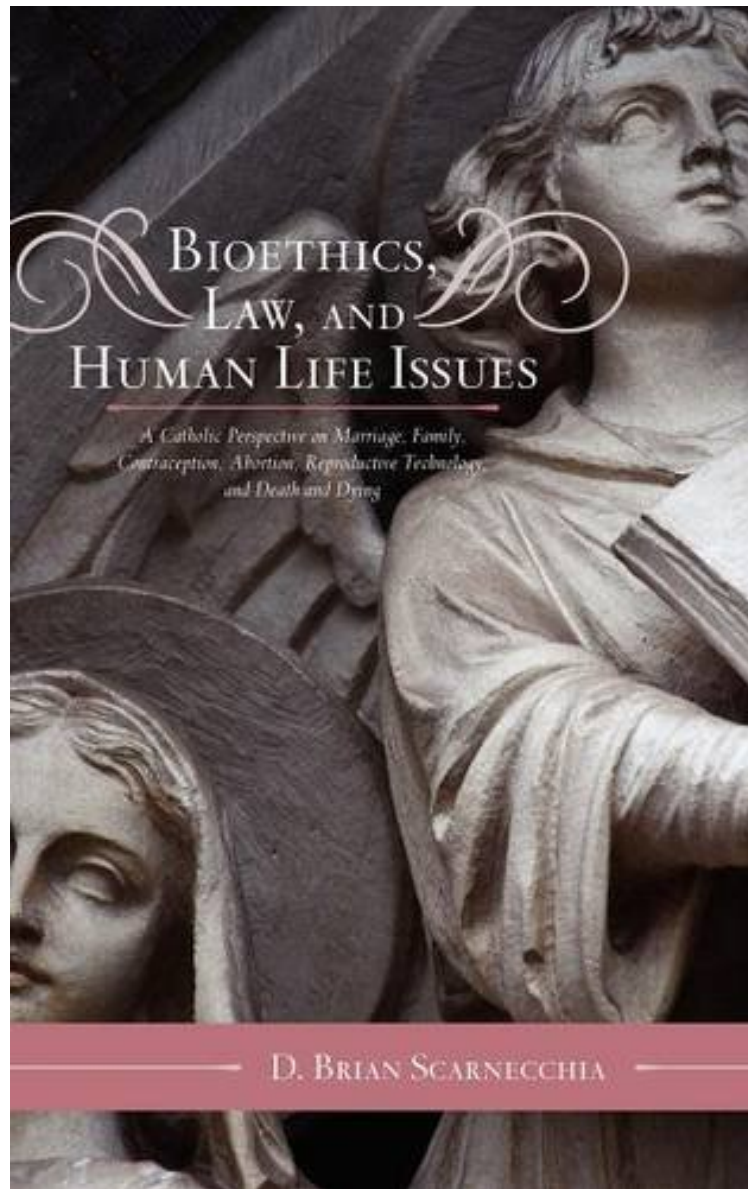


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## **Bioethics, Law, and Human Life Issues: A Catholic Perspective on Marriage, Family, Contraception, Abortion, Reproductive Technology, and Death and Dying (Catholic Social Thought)**

*D. Brian Scarnecchia*

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Bioethics, Law, and Human Life Issues: A Catholic Perspective on Marriage, Family, Contraception, Abortion, Reproductive Technology, and Death and Dying* (Catholic Social Thought):

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. this is a very good book. If your goal is a grounding in Catholic teaching By David N. Tostenson This book is admirably clear in terms of presentation of some potentially complex ideas, and also admirably comprehensive. For instance, the introductory chapters deal in part with Scholastic/Aristotelian theory of knowledge, and the account is fairly clear and readable. If your goal is a fairly comprehensive summary of Catholic moral teaching, this is a very good book. If your goal, however, is to get some real sense of the actual debate among bioethicists on important moral issues, this is not a very helpful book. Scarnecchia is so concerned to present the Catholic view that alternative views and arguments are given very short shrift indeed, often simply dismissed or more or less distorted. To take just one small but telling example, the work of the very influential utilitarian philosopher Peter Singer is very briefly discussed, but he is inaccurately described as advocating "animal rights," and his idea that all sentient beings should get equal consideration is not clearly explained-- leaving the reader with the utterly false impression that Singer would not say there is any difference at all morally speaking between a normal human being and, for instance, a pig. Rather bewilderingly, we are told that Singer's work inflates the "prerogatives" of animals "at the expense of the poor and the relief of human misery," a claim that should be utterly baffling to anyone even remotely familiar with Singer's fight against global extreme poverty, which is not even mentioned in passing. (It is worth noting that few of the references listed in the discussion of Singer actually mention Singer's work \*at all\*-- they are almost entirely references to presumably hostile secondary sources, which should lead us to suspect that Scarnecchia's knowledge of Singer's work is limited). This is merely an example, notable for the fact that Singer is at least mentioned and some attempt is made to describe his views. In most chapters on specific topics, such as abortion or homosexuality, there is even less attempt at dealing with real-life opponents or their actual arguments. This is perhaps reasonable, given the nature of the book and its presumed audience, but the reader should be aware going in that this is not, and is not intended to be, any kind of argumentative text, and is rather a dogmatic presentation of Catholic doctrine. So, as a resource for understanding Catholic moral thought, it's quite good. As a serious look at bioethical issues as they are actually debated, it's nearly useless.

*Bioethics, Law, and Human Life Issues: A Catholic Perspective on Marriage, Family, Contraception, Abortion, Reproductive Technology, and Death and Dying* draws on the Magisterial teaching of the Catholic Church to outline a Catholic response to a host of controversial issues related to human life. Scarnecchia lays out a Catholic moral theology based on the writings of Pope John Paul II and Thomas Aquinas, and he then applies those Christian moral principles to today's most contentious ethical issues, including reproductive technology, embryo adoption, contraception, abortion, family and same-sex marriage, and euthanasia and assisted suicide. This review of Catholic moral principles brings together an in-depth consideration of the central human life issues of our day with abundant reference to the Church's social teaching and to contrasting positions of today's leading ethicists.

Any ethicists, priest, or Protestant minister interested in both ethics and the Catholic position on these issues will find this book a valuable resource and reference for years to come. The volume is thoroughly researched and documented. (American Reference Books Annual, May-August 2010) Brian Scarnecchia has written an impressive book that applies Catholic moral theology and Christian moral principles to the most important issues of our time. The book is the fruit of his many years of teaching courses in Theology, Human Life Studies, and Law at Franciscan University and Ave Maria Law School. The heart of this book flows from both the light of right reason and the light of Christ. (Catholic Social Science ) About the Author D. Brian Scarnecchia is the founding President of the International Solidarity Human Rights Institute (ISHRI). He is associate professor of Human Life Studies and Legal Studies at Franciscan University of Steubenville and is currently a Visiting Associate Professor of Law at Ave Maria School of Law. He is a member of the expert committee of the Rome Forum for Catholic NGOs, and he serves on the Board of Directors and is legal counsel for the Society of Catholic Social Scientists (SCSS) and is their primary representative to the United Nations.