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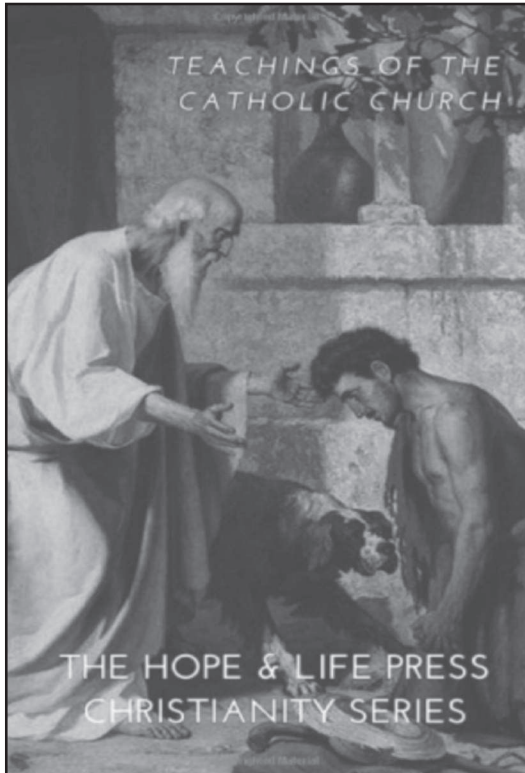
Following Jesus in Healthcare
4th May
Hull University Catholic Chaplaincy

IN THIS ISSUE

- **Following Jesus in Healthcare**
The Annual Conference of the
CMA, Hull University Chaplaincy
4th May 2019
- **Holiness**
- **Work as prayer**
- **Doctors in Africa**
- **How not to apply Catholic teaching on
withdrawing life sustaining treatment**
- **A journey through faith**
- **The medical Inkling**

TEACHINGS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. PUBLISHED AS PART OF THE HOPE AND LIFE PRESS CHRISTIANITY SERIES

REVIEWED BY PRAVIN THEVATHASAN



This proved to be a very interesting read. The chapter on the magisterium was especially helpful. We are reminded that "not everything contained in the statements of the ordinary magisterium is infallible." Thus when the pope discussed employment issues or matters pertaining to economics, there need be no charism of infallibility. In contrast, when he "teaches and judges of faith and morals for the universal Church" the teachings must be "adhered to with submission of faith."

Thus submission must be given on matters of faith and morals. Pope John Paul wrote very clearly that women cannot be ordained to the priesthood. This is not a matter to be discussed. It pertains to faith. On the other hand, he upset many people by inviting leaders of different religions to come together to pray. Note that he did not want them to pray together. Nevertheless, there was a resultant temptation towards religious indifferentism, the idea that one religion is as good as another. The pope was trying to be a good pastor when he asked that all people of good will pray for peace. He was clearly not invoking his ordinary magisterium. In the case of Pope Francis, this pastoral approach has indeed been numerous. It goes without saying that a pastoral approach can never contradict a matter of doctrine.

What about the death penalty? Like most Catholics, I am opposed to it. However, there can be nothing "intrinsically evil" about capital punishment. Otherwise we would have to condemn all popes up to Pius XII. I would have preferred Pope Francis to have reiterated the teachings of

John Paul: that practically speaking, there is no need for it.

There is always a danger that justice and peace issues are to be seen as "liberal" and pro-life issues are for "conservative" Catholics. But the Church is neither left nor right. I was delighted to read the following : " The natural law itself, no less than devotion to humanity, urges that ways of migration be opened" to people who have good reasons to leave their homeland. This quote comes from the great "conservative" pope, Pius XII.

In summary, this is a very helpful overview of the important teachings of the Church.