

these assertions are important cautions against a facile and false “globalized” moral program.

But if H. really means that “the world is not condemned to live violently” and “can and will respond positively to a witness of peace” (xii), he needs to show what that witness should look like (beyond not personally killing anyone), and how it communicates with “the world.” Despite a chapter on “the future of parish ministry,” H. does not illustrate what Christian churches or organizations (such as the Catholic Peacebuilding Network of which Mennonite John Paul Lederach is a member) can do or are doing to create “alternatives to war.” There is much to be learned from those actually suffering the violence of civil conflicts, or working in conflict zones to bring reconciliation and restorative justice. Surely they would not agree that inordinate suffering is simply an inevitable part of life (123–25), or that talk of justice cannot span acutely local instances of rape, mutilation, and killing.

*Boston College*

LISA SOWLE CAHILL

INTERPRÉTER ET AGIR: JALONS POUR UNE ÉTHIQUE CHRÉTIENNE. By Alain Thomasset, S.J. Cerf: Paris, 2011. Pp. 422. €32.

In this engaging volume, moral theologian Thomasset reaffirms the task of today’s moral theology: the promotion of our humanization. To achieve this task, he relies, first, on a phenomenological approach that includes the critical contribution of our ethical reflection, the normative role of moral theology, and the practical wisdom that is demanded in the various situations we face. Second, he lays out his understanding of moral theology as a triple hermeneutics that focuses on God’s word, on the Christian tradition, and on the experience of believers. These directions of research constitute the first three parts of his volume, followed by a section on the ecclesial and social dimensions of Christian action.

Part 1 studies, first, the use of the Bible in moral theology, by discussing historical and theological models in dialogue with William Spohn’s foundational work. Second, it examines the ethical and moral biblical message, by relying on the theological concepts of creation and alliance, inspired by the work of Paul Beauchamp on the unity of the two Testaments.

Part 2 provides the author’s hermeneutic in analyzing the Christian tradition. To limit his task, T. focuses, first, on four historical figures (Augustine, Aquinas, Ockham, and Alphonsus Liguori) as emblematic of key historical ages in moral theology (patristic, Scholastic, nominalist, and casuistic). Second, he critically studies natural law by highlighting the difficulty of defining nature and law, its diverse use in magisterial teaching on sexual and social issues, and its complex history (from Aquinas, through

the Scholastics, to contemporary approaches). Finally, he comments on the well-known debate between autonomous ethics and faith ethics, exemplified by Josef Fuchs and Philippe Delhaye.

In Part 3, T. addresses the believer's moral life by focusing on: (1) the human person, where he proposes a theological anthropology inspired by Paul Ricoeur and Louis Janssens; (2) the tension between conscience, freedom, and moral law; (3) the renewed interest on virtues and character, by acknowledging the contributions of Alasdair MacIntyre, Stanley Hauerwas, and William Spohn; and (4) the intimate unity between morality and spirituality, with an emphasis on discernment that relies on the Ignatian tradition.

The last part broadens the scope of moral theology by discussing the ecclesial and social dimensions of moral life—ecclesially, prayer and liturgical life shape our ethos. Moreover, T. discusses the tasks and responsibilities of the magisterium on moral matters and the interactions with theologians, believers, and civil society. The volume ends with a very interesting discussion of the French social situation, its history, and current challenges, in dialogue with French authors and inspired by French scholar Paul Valadier.

As this overview indicates, the volume is ambitious. Well written and anchored solidly in Vatican II, it continues the tradition inaugurated by Richard Gula's influential volume *Reason Informed by Faith* (1989) that inspired T. However, the hermeneutic approach is innovative and develops the author's interest shown in his previous book, *Paul Ricoeur, une poétique de la morale* (1996).

Throughout the volume, T.'s approach to complex debates and conflicts is balanced— e.g., when he stresses the synergy between virtues and norms, as Klaus Demmer affirmed, and the centrality of grace in moral life against any one-sided emphasis on our actions. T.'s schemas helpfully synthesize and integrate the text.

The volume merits the careful attention of scholars and graduate students. It provides a thoughtful presentation of fundamental moral theology with an original approach. Hence, it complements recent works published in the United States (e.g., James F. Keenan, "Living the Truth," *Theological Studies* 73 [2012], and Giannino Piana, *In novità di vita* [2012]).

While the volume's already great length did not allow further development of some of the topics addressed, I hope that T. will discuss them more extensively in future publications, specifically:

- (1) T. shares the renewed interest in the virtues and spirituality as integral to moral life. I hope he will engage with other contemporary authors, who are shaping this renewal, and expand his own contribution in light of his hermeneutical focus and biblical bias.

- (2) He briefly discusses the role and use of principles in moral reasoning and discernment (284–85). I wonder whether his approach would allow us to rethink their role in moral discernment, maybe with even greater attention to the common good.
- (3) T. ends with a discussion of the ecclesial and social dimensions of moral life. In both cases, an expanded attention to varied contexts, approaches, and authors around the world could confirm the complexity of the hermeneutical task and emphasize the relational dimension of the moral agent.
- (4) Finally, T. refers to highly debated ethical issues—e.g., euthanasia (86), racism (274), and abortion (369)—to exemplify his hermeneutical approach. Expanding on these references would greatly enrich the current theological discourse on these issues.

*Boston College*

ANDREA VICINI, S.J.

CHRIST AND SPIRITUALITY IN ST. THOMAS AQUINAS. By Jean-Pierre Torrell. Translated from the French by Bernhard Blankenhorn. Washington: Catholic University of America, 2011. Pp. xxiii + 265. \$24.95.

Torrell is well known internationally for his writings on Thomas Aquinas. He joins past and present historical research with the theological insights of scholars ranging from Jean-Hervé Nicolas to Otto Pesch. This collection gathers essays from 1991 to 2004: one essay has been published in the United States but in French, while two have been published in a previous collection.

Around 15 years ago, T. drew together his research and reflection into a two-volume work that he referred to as an “initiation”—readers, however, might find it magisterial. Volume 1 was entitled *Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*; and volume 2, *Spiritual Master*. T. began the latter by noting that one would not immediately think of Aquinas as a spiritual director. Aware that medieval theologians do not expound distinct areas like spirituality first articulated in the years around the Council of Trent, T. wants to show that Aquinas can contribute to the topics of spirituality prominent from the 17th to the 20th centuries, and also that this medieval theology can be viewed today as a spirituality linking God and believers. T. is not writing about devotional attitudes or methods of prayer but about a presentation of Christian life whose sources are the Bible, liturgy, past theologians, and human wisdom. Aquinas’s theology of Christian life is realistic and creation affirming; it shows no fear or servitude; it is full of joy, focused on freedom and not on sin. This spirituality is in source and ground the missions of Word and Spirit in the lives of men and women.