

extended discussion of the novel *Gilead*, by Protestant Calvinist Marilynne Robinson, which demonstrates precisely how actions help shape our relation before God and our own self-understanding. W.'s use of this novel, as well as other narratives from literature and from current events, is a particularly powerful feature of her book. Additionally, her defense of the need for truthfulness before God draws upon Karl Barth's account of the divine word that God speaks to humans in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (182–83). W. does not directly address ways in which her account of sin and grace may overcome limitations in contemporary Protestant ethics, but her constructive use of Protestant scholarship nonetheless points toward the value of dialogue between Protestant and Catholic ethicists concerning the nature of sin and sinful actions, the constructive possibilities that a robust conception of grace can provide to our understandings of agents' moral capacities, and the centrality of one's relationship with God for understanding one's character.

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THE LIMITS OF HOSPITALITY. By Jessica Wroblewski. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2012. Pp. xvi + 168. \$19.95.

Wroblewski tackles a perennial question for the Christian faithful: "Should I welcome the stranger even at the risk of my safety, and that of my friends and family?" Her response is inductive and theologically rich.

The five chapters flow from narrative to theological analysis. The narratives are often W.'s, but they also include those of the likes of Henri Nouwen and Dorothy Day and her Catholic Worker movement. Throughout the book we find W. in two university towns with high poverty rates: South Bend, Indiana, and New Haven, Connecticut. Her graduate studies in theology function as the lens through which she interprets her role in these communities. Her experiences also serve as examples of the realities of lived hospitality in the United States in the 21st century.

The introduction contains the skeleton of her thesis: "For the sake of hospitality itself, there must be limits to hospitality" (xi). This finds quick support and flesh in the first chapter. It opens to find W. offering a homeless man her attic to escape the elements. Many will connect with her personal struggles to live the works of mercy, and with her ultimate decision not to turn her attic into a shelter. This narrative and the tension it presents beautifully orient the text. She lives out the limits of hospitality before she provides Christian and contemporary definitions of hospitality. She moves quickly but insightfully through the Christian tradition on hospitality; she then settles into a more extended treatment of contemporary approaches to the topic, focusing on the work of deconstructionist

Jacques Derrida. In elaborating on her thesis W. argues that hospitality must respect certain limits (such as the number of people invited to the table) if guests are to truly be welcomed, be comfortable, and safe in the host's environment.

One of W.'s most important contributions comes in chapter 2 on spirituality and hospitality. Here W. enters the ongoing project of integrating spirituality and moral theology. She succeeds by naming the spiritual disciplines that cultivate hospitality. These are presented as pairs, such as prayer of word and prayer of silence, solitude and fellowship, and service and rest. These pairings continue the dynamic tension that W. created earlier. For instance, she argues that one's service cannot be continual because one tends to equate meaningful activities like service with "being important," but one needs to rest so as to be served by others (63–64).

W.'s treatment of identity and hospitality is timely. She begins by drawing on Nouwen's claim that the host must nonaggressively confront the guest with the host's identity. The real difference between host and guest must be established. She later deftly argues that Christians must take on a common identity if their hospitality is to be Christian. This identity requires that the subject of the community's orientation is God. The communal focus on God is maintained through the spiritual disciplines indicated above. In the end W. concludes that hospitality to God, to fellow Christians, and to non-Christians is, in part, constitutive of authentic Christian identity. This section is a true contribution to the Catholic identity discourse that is currently a fixture on Catholic campuses throughout the nation.

The final chapter reflects on the Catholic Worker Movement and its practice of hospitality. Here W. pushes against the limits she has established in the first four chapters. She effectively argues that hospitality requires limits, but also that limits must be continually challenged.

A couple of mild critiques are in order. One concerns the uneven pacing of the book. The text moves too quickly through some theological material. For instance, the Benedictine practice of hospitality receives only one paragraph. Then, in places, the book slows unnecessarily. W.'s extended and strong theological critique of Henry Cloud and John Townsend's best-selling *Boundaries* series of self-help books attacks "low hanging fruit," but it does little to advance her thesis. Furthermore, W. employs an unfortunate pattern throughout: as she enters the more theologically dense sections, she invites readers to skip to sections that contain personal narratives and pastoral applications; this pattern disrupts the interconnection of theology, personal narrative, and pastoral application that makes the text important. The text's uniqueness is in the combination of serious academic theology and lived Christian experience. Theologians and lay readers alike would each do well to consider the entirety of her content and style.

By focusing on the limits of hospitality W. has contributed much not only to hospitality studies in particular but also to Christian ethics in general. Christian ethics at times fails to acknowledge the existence of competing goods and tragic choices. W.'s book fruitfully wades into the moral complexities of the hospitable life.

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BIOMEDICINE AND BEATITUDE: AN INTRODUCTION TO CATHOLIC BIOETHICS. By Nicanor Pier Giorgio Austriaco, O.P. Catholic Moral Thought Series. Washington: Catholic University of America, 2011. Pp. xiv + 327. \$44.95; \$24.95.

Many of the most important and complex ethical dilemmas of our time concern questions in biomedicine. Persons and organizations face pressing moral choices at the beginning and end of human life and must engage in challenging ethical deliberation about human reproductive technologies, end-of-life care, organ donation and transplantation, embryo and stem cell research, physician-patient relationships, health-care funding and distribution, and other issues. In this clearly written introduction to Catholic bioethics, Austriaco examines many leading biomedical issues, including direct and indirect abortion, selective prenatal testing, human sexual acts and their moral meaning, contraception, direct sterilization, in vitro fertilization and other reproductive technologies, human embryo research, hydration and nutrition in end-of-life care, and euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide.

A highly traditional Thomistic natural-law framework guides A.'s examination of biomedical procedures and related moral questions. He draws on John Paul II's theology of the body in analyzing various moral issues in patient medical care and questions of sexual ethics (e.g., 74–77). He presents a strong natural-law argument in defense of Paul VI's *Humanae vitae* and the encyclical's prohibition of artificial contraception (80–81). When considering moral objections to church teaching, A. observes that “a single contraceptive act, in itself . . . distorts the structure and meaning of human sexuality, [and] hinders the spouses from attaining the beatitude that comes from the practice of chaste sexual acts” (87).

A. devotes significant attention to “bioethics at the beginning of life” and to “bioethics and human procreation” (chaps. 2 and 3). He addresses questions concerning the moral status of the human embryo and offers a sound explanation of the principle of “the dignity of the human being” (44–47) as a central foundation of Roman Catholic bioethical thought. Chapter 2 treats “disputed questions” such as ectopic pregnancies and prenatal testing and diagnosis (64–69). His careful analysis of the