

persons are already regarded as at least equal to humans in the hierarchy of being, does not an exclusive focus on human primacy and human desires alone constitute unjust and unjustifiable speciesism? As we identify elements of intelligence, self-awareness, and sociality in other animals, does that not give them a dignity that calls for our respect?

C. contextualizes the question of how we treat animals, especially animals used for food, in the contemporary world of a consumerist culture, widespread factory farming, a looming ecological crisis, and a global need for more equitable use of resources like water and grain. He offers an ethic of resistance in the form of nonviolence, respect for life, especially vulnerable life, and a rejection of blind and selfish consumerism. As he concludes, he returns to factory farming and its harms to animals, workers, and the environment, and to the larger question of eating meat at all. He makes a powerful case for Christians and Christian communities to take a stand against the cruel excesses of industrial animal production. Justice must be manifest in action in society, not merely in private life. He raises, but does not seek to resolve, related questions of animal research, hunting, and even keeping pets, noting the ambiguities of each issue.

This book should trouble us. While a longer work might engage more deeply issues of the science of animal cognition and self-awareness, C. aims precisely at the cognition and self-awareness of Catholic (and other) Christians—how can we justify the massive abuse of animals for unnecessary, even trivial, ends? This is an important and increasingly urgent moral question, a matter of social sin yet imperfectly recognized. C.'s work provides a helpful and accessible primer for Christians who have ears to hear. The focused theological approach to what can easily become a vast question is a strength of this work, as are the questions for reflection that conclude each chapter. I can imagine this book sparking lively discussions in homes, churches, and classrooms.

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*Selbstaufklärung theologischer Ethik: Themen—Thesen—Perspektiven.* By Klaus Demmer. Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2014. Pp. 238. €29.90.

This volume by Klaus Demmer (1931–2014), one of the greatest post-Vatican II moral theologians, was completed a couple of months before his death. He taught at the Pontifical Gregorian University for more than 30 years (1970–2003) and trained and greatly influenced several generations of theologians around the world. His colleague, Antonio Autiero, edited the book for publication. A synthesis of D.'s thought for today's church and society, the volume is written in very concise and technical language and, to understand it well, requires an extensive knowledge of moral terminology, history, and the current ethical debates.

The book provides neither major innovations nor deviations from D.'s previous works, but reveals how he continued to examine and improve his own system of

thought until his death by consulting the latest literature in theology, philosophy, and other disciplines. D. perceived his system of thought as provisional, marked by its pilgrim character, constantly in dynamic confrontation with contingent reality and, at the same time, deeply rooted in the ultimate reality, God.

D. complements the Scholastic tradition of moral theology with forays into transcendental theology and hermeneutics. The result is a conscious turn to the subject, whom D. defines as a free, autonomous, yet always conditioned being. All individuals aim at fulfilling their lives, a manifestation of their fundamental orientation toward the ultimate goal. Moral theology's duty is to clarify the entire spectrum of concrete conditions and to accompany moral agents in achieving human flourishing in light of christological anthropology. Moreover, D. insists, moral theology should be in active and competent dialogue with the whole of the pluralistic world. "A moral theologian should not, by any means, allow one to be driven into a corner of some special world," D. warns in his conclusion (237). Moral theology should offer acceptable, alternative solutions to address contemporary ethical questions.

The book is divided into ten chapters. Their content is intertwined to offer a constantly deepening knowledge of foundational moral concepts. The first five chapters lay the theoretical basis, and the last five chapters focus on practical application by considering specific fields of human activity (politics, sexuality, and bioethics). D. warns against simplifications and drawing hasty conclusions that fail to consider the totality of the circumstances of a particular action. The ultimate responsibility for an action always lies with the moral agent, guided by the virtue of *epikeia* (reasonableness or equity), by which we learn how to apply moral norms.

The individual's fundamental option informs all categorical choices and depends on one's faith and consciousness about the meaning of life, implying that believers have a "certain advantage" compared to nonbelievers. While religious experience and commitment drive anthropology, a moral responsibility nevertheless remains (30): "Those who believe in God have better cards, but it is another question how they play with them" (180).

The book is marked by great sensitivity to the history of personal moral choices and individual judgments, and to justice and one's vocation and personal moral obligations. For example, D. finds it shocking that some Catholics can request and obtain a dispensation from religious vows and from celibacy, but that others are not allowed dispensation from marriage vows. He understands that the former two do not have sacramental status. He wonders, however, whether it could be possible to distinguish different levels of the irreversibility of life decisions (82). In searching for an answer, D. argues for the possibility of a dispensation from marriage vows as the very last resort in addressing unsolvable marital problems. Above all, D. stresses the importance of a thorough marriage preparation and an ongoing renewal of one's life decision.

The book focuses on individual moral action and is not interested in articulating a systematic study of specific sectors of moral reasoning (e.g., social ethics). Critically, D.'s ethics risks being characterized by intellectualism, failing to attend sufficiently to the importance of emotions in moral decision-making. Idealistic tendencies accentuate

D.'s thought, despite his repeated emphasis on the importance of the historical dimension. Readers will notice how D. does not address concrete cases that could help him explain more clearly his positions. Nevertheless, D.'s last work encourages moral theologians to articulate their original approach in fundamental moral theology by focusing on christological anthropology, while at the same time remaining engaged participants in today's ethical discourse within a pluralistic world.

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*Ancient Christian Worship: Early Church Practices in Social, Historical, and Theological Perspective.* By Andrew B. McGowan. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014. Pp. xiv + 298. \$34.99.

McGowan is very well known for his groundbreaking book, *Ascetic Eucharists* (1999), which helped uncover the great diversity of eucharistic practice in the ancient church. For example, M. is arguably responsible for the current view that bread and wine may not have been merely token elements that made up the eucharistic meal, but actually constituted a poor person's meal as such. The same could be true for bread and water or bread, water, and salt. Currently dean of Yale's Berkeley Divinity School, M. has broadened his horizons in this study. His goal is to assess the evidence for Christian liturgical practices through both literary and archeological evidence from NT times to the beginning of the fifth century. In so doing, he deals with the evidence for and current scholarship on: meal, word, music, initiation, prayer, and time. He begins by contextualizing liturgical practice within the broader category of worship as devotion and service to God; hence the book's title.

As a scholar of the "Bradshaw-Johnson Notre Dame school of liturgical studies," M. is keen to underline diversity in Christian practice and to point out where scholarship has assumed later practice in looking at the evidence (e.g., the relation of and distinction between the Eucharist and the so-called agape supper, 47–50). Much of the freshness of M.'s interpretation comes from his extensive engagement with the social history of the Greco-Roman world as in his explanation of how the codex (as opposed to the scroll) became useful in the Christian reading culture (90).

Of particular value is M.'s extensive treatment of the word of God—in terms of reading, proclamation, and preaching—and his inclusion of both music and dance in the study. The inclusion of dance is especially valuable because it rarely appears in studies of early Christian liturgy.

I found the chapters on the Eucharist and on the word to be the most thorough and thought-provoking. Occasionally M. has an excellent formulation as in his comparison of the martyr cult to the Roman patronage system: "The capacity of the martyrs to inhabit and make present the example of Christ added a heavenly superstructure to the Roman world's patronage system, which included but went beyond the lives of households and families" (243).