

Virtue and the Moral Life: Theological and Philosophical Perspectives. Edited by William Werpehowski and Kathryn Getek Soltis. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2014. Pp. ix + 209. \$85.

This welcome volume is a collection of ten papers by both seasoned and younger scholars on “The Intersection of Virtue and Ethics” that grew out of a lecture series sponsored by Villanova University. After two introductory essays (part I), the topics covered are set in the contexts of the public sphere (part II), the family (part III), and personal interior life (part IV) and reflect a pattern found in the discussion of the nature of virtue by contemporary virtue ethicists. These contexts form concentric circles of human relationship in which corresponding virtues are cultivated in order to maintain the relationships within these spheres.

The volume is carefully organized and well balanced. Each part features both theological and philosophical perspectives on particular areas of life experience. The conversation might have been enriched had the authors engaged one another’s contributions prior to publication. Thomas Aquinas was among the first to synthesize systematically the philosophical and theological perspectives on virtue, but in recent centuries, with declining interest in virtue theory, interactions between the two disciplines in the field of virtue ethics has waned. In the 20th century, Joseph Kotva pioneered the attempt to make sense of philosophical virtue theory in a theological context. The chief contribution of this volume thus lies in creating a much-needed space for reengaging philosophical and theological perspectives on virtues. Werpehowski and Getek Soltis, however, invite us to go beyond such a standard intersection by engaging other faith traditions and the secular world as well. The two essays by Jamie Schillinger and Edmund Santurri in part V demonstrate such engagement by discussing the virtues of humility, justice, and forgiveness from a philosophical-theological perspective. Finally, Santurri’s chapter is distinctive in that it reflects his long-time involvement in dialogue between theological and philosophical ethics.

The editors and contributing authors should be commended for advocating a return to virtue in various modes of doing ethics, whether philosophical, theological, interfaith, or crosscultural. The collection shows that it is both desirable and possible to nurture virtue ethicists who are capable of engaging in interdisciplinary discussion.

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A Case for Character: Towards a Lutheran Virtue Ethics. By Joel D. Biermann. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014. Pp. vii + 204. \$29.

Biermann perceives an urgent need for Christian churches to provide preaching that shapes character and teaches morality (5), but he finds many fellow Lutherans unwilling to take up that challenge because they misunderstand character formation as a form of works righteousness, or they focus on the importance of preaching justification by