

which emerge from his causal reading of Aquinas' virtue theory. These novel proposals further demonstrate the potential fruitfulness of this hermeneutical approach. In addition to touching on intra-Thomistic debates, Austin's interests also bring him into conversation with broader questions in virtue ethics, such as the challenge of situationism and debates about whether virtues can be misused.

This book has the potential to appeal to a broad audience. Its novel interpretation of Thomistic virtue theory and robust engagement with a variety of interlocutors—including contemporary Thomists, philosophical virtue ethicists, and (perhaps most uniquely) the tradition of medieval and early modern Thomistic commentators—will make it of particular interest to scholars of Aquinas. At the same time, its accessible prose and inclusion of suggested readings from Aquinas' texts also makes it suitable for classroom use with advanced undergraduates or graduate students. Austin has done proponents of virtue ethics a great service by providing a clear, concise, and contemporary guide to Aquinas' virtue theory.

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The Following of Jesus: A Reply to The Imitation of Christ. By Leonardo Boff. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2019. xxii + 121 pages. \$25.00 (paper).
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In this short book, Boff expresses his appreciation for Thomas á Kempis' spiritual classic *The Imitation of Christ* while also offering a complement to the fifteenth-century text. Whereas Thomas' work focuses on the interior dispositions needed to imitate Christ, Boff turns to the ministry, death, and resurrection of the historical Jesus. In doing so, his aim is to point the disciple toward the type of action and way of being in the world that might allow her to follow in Jesus' footsteps and work toward the coming reign of God. In this way, as both Boff's introduction and Robert Ellsberg's publisher's note explain, Boff avoids the seeming dualism of *The Imitation of Christ* and, instead, offers a work that affirms the goodness of creation and God's indwelling presence throughout it.

Written to imitate the style of *The Imitation of Christ*, the work offers a brief *summa* of Boff's thought, presented in the form of an exhortation to his fellow disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. At times punctuated by short prayers, Boff's thirty-one short chapters offer insight into both his understanding of the Christian mystery and his own spirituality. Following a collection of brief selections from *The Imitation of Christ*, Boff's reply proceeds in three

movements, though it is not formally divided as such. First, Boff frames his summons to follow Christ in theological and doxological explorations of the trinity, God's self-revelation in history, creation, and theological anthropology. In doing so, he demonstrates great appreciation for Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*, using it as a dialogue partner to explain his understanding of God's relationship to creation. Second, Boff moves to the incarnation, the ministry of Jesus, and the paschal mystery. Here, Boff masterfully begins to suggest how Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection call his disciples to share in the work of liberating the poor, in part, by relating Jesus' work to various parts of the Lord's Prayer. Finally, Boff turns to the life of the discipleship, empowered by the Spirit. Like Thomas in *The Imitation of Christ*, Boff also devotes attention to the dispositions that a disciple ought to cultivate. But Boff takes his reflection on these dispositions in a different direction. Thomas focused on how the dispositions he highlighted might lead, primarily, to personal spiritual growth through worldly detachment. Boff stresses how certain dispositions prepare the disciple to stand in solidarity with the poor and share in Jesus' work of building up God's reign of justice and peace.

The work, as a whole, is a delight to read. There are, however, two critiques that must be raised. First, at times, Boff's discussion of Jesus' relationship to other Jewish groups during his ministry, especially the Pharisees, and his portrayal of the law risk furthering harmful stereotypes about Judaism when compared to Christianity. Certainly, Boff notes that Jesus draws on his Jewish heritage throughout his ministry. But portraying the Pharisees as self-righteous legalists and contrasting the supposed rigidity of the law to Jesus' message of unconditional love are problematic historical and theological claims that risk furthering anti-Jewish biases and tropes in Christian theology. Second, while Boff certainly affirms the equal human dignity of women and men and recognizes the patriarchal oppression of women by men in the church and world, his discussion of the masculine and feminine falls into a patronizing form of gender essentialism. For instance, he states, "The *masculine* is symbolized by the capacity to think, make plans, carry out actions, overcome difficulties, organize the world, and articulate nature" (106). Needless to say, this type of claim, even when made with good intentions, ignores decades of feminist theological critique of this type of harmful and ungrounded gender essentialism.

Despite these concerns, the work is to be recommended for those looking for either a twenty-first-century complement to Thomas' *The Imitation of Christ* or a concise and helpful overview of Boff's central theological concerns. On both counts, it is exceedingly helpful. It also provides a window into the Franciscan spirituality that has animated Boff's tireless theological work over the last half century. This book could be especially useful in

upper-division undergraduate and master's-level courses on spirituality, especially when paired with *The Imitation of Christ*.

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Essential Catholic Social Thought. 2nd ed. By Bernard V. Brady. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Boks, 2017. xxi + 378 pages. \$44.00 (paper).
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In the second edition of *Essential Catholic Social Thought*, Bernard V. Brady makes a prolific contribution to the field as he offers an updated version of his introduction to the social teaching of the Catholic Church. The book offers a concise overview of official Catholic social teaching, but also outlines how those documents respond to concrete human experiences.

The book is divided into eleven chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 serve as a basic introduction to Catholic social teaching and the study of this tradition. Here, he explains the most common principles of Catholic social teaching and offers ways to reflect on those principles in order to make them applicable for our lives. Chapter 2 focuses on four major themes: personalism, the common good, conscience, and vocation. Brady especially focuses on the importance of practice. Catholic social teaching is not simply a collection of documents but requires awareness of who we are if we view ourselves as incarnated beings.

Chapters 3 through 8 begin to document the history of Catholic social teaching and its tradition. Each chapter is constructed around major documents and touches upon particular themes of the social teaching of the church. The focal points of chapters 3 and 4 are the encyclical's *Rerum Novarum* and *Pacem in terris*. While discussing those, he includes voices such as John Ryan or John Courtney Murray to highlight how these encyclicals contributed to the social Catholicism of the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Chapter 5 presents the social teaching of the Second Vatican Council, which includes selections of *Gaudium et spes*, *Nostra aetate*, *Lumen gentium*, *Dignitatis humanae*, as well as the 1967 encyclical *Populorum progressio*. Chapter 6 includes Paul VI's *Octogesima adveniens* and the World Synod of Bishops' *Justice in the World* as well as a summary of the writings of the Catholic social tradition from Latin America. Chapters 7 and 8 focus on the writings of St. John Paul II. First, Brady discusses *Laborem exercens* and *Sollicitudo rei socialis* and the importance of the principle of solidarity for Catholic social teaching. Chapter 8 highlights *Centesimus annus* followed by a discussion on racism considering Catholic thought.