

repeat well-known episodes from the war. Some personalities mentioned in the text are identified in the notes, and others are not. While choices had to be made, the reasons are not always clear.

Sheeran's role in the army is confusing. As a Redemptorist priest his presiding at the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church is completely understandable and adds interesting detail for anyone seeking to understand camp life and something about the work of chaplains during the war. What is not clear is his relationship to the military around him. Sheeran added to the confusion early in the work when he reported on a conversation he had with General Robert E. Lee. Sheeran reports to have told Lee, "I protest against being placed on a level with military officers. I am a Catholic Priest and as such I am even *your* superior" (155). The comment illustrates the very unclear relationship between the two groups, as do Sheeran's actions throughout the work. A bit of clarification about the roles of chaplains during the war in either footnotes or the introduction would have been helpful.

Despite the small annoyances presented, Hayes has provided a careful, respectful treatment of a very useful primary source.

KAREN A. KEHOE
Saint Vincent College

The Practice of Catholic Theology: A Modest Proposal. By Paul J. Griffiths. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016. xiii + 142 pages. \$29.95.

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Griffiths describes this slender volume as a how-to work, and he does not disappoint. It contains solid practical advice for those aspiring to do Catholic theology, even while arguing for several controverted positions. The book is divided into forty-one short sections, which fall roughly into three broad units. The first fifteen sections treat the nature of Catholic theology, asserting that it is a reasoned discourse about the Lord that seeks "cognitive intimacy" in response to a "particular archive and a particular tradition" (24). In these sections, Griffiths helpfully distinguishes confessional from theological discourse, sharply differentiates cognitive intimacy from other forms of intimacy, and explores the value of both ecclesial and nonecclesial theology. Likely the most controversial part of the book, this first set of sections crests with the claim that only knowledge and fluency are required for doing Catholic theology: baptism, faith, holiness, and moral virtue serve as no more than "contingent aids" (48). Even if one remains unconvinced by Griffiths' position, his

clear and engaging argumentation demands serious consideration and lays bare key points of disagreement.

The next group of sections focuses on the “Catholic archive” (54), that is, what the Catholic theologian needs to know. The almost inevitable debate arising from other parts of the book risks obfuscating these balanced and practical sections. For example, while enjoying widespread agreement, Griffiths’ assertion that “Scripture ought to be a constant interlocutor for all Catholic theologians” (63) serves as an ever-needed reminder. The accompanying discussion of various versions of Scripture shows the seriousness with which he takes this claim. The brief introductions to conciliar texts, Denzinger, catechisms and creeds, canon law, liturgical books, and various nontextual artifacts are useful for neophyte theologians. However, his assertion that “the textual archive remains the principal resource for theologians” (91) seems unconcerned with the life of the church as a *locus* of theology, a fear not allayed by other sections of the book.

The final portion of the book highlights the skills needed for the performance of theology, which include the capacity to generate theological questions, make distinctions, argue in a reasoned fashion, and to discover, interpret, and speculate. Griffiths’ earlier assertion of theology as a type of discourse pays dividends in these sections, enabling him to speak about theological fluency, lexicon, and syntax. Two of the longer sections in this area of the book elaborate and demonstrate the importance of the phenomenological attitude, specified as attention to the structures and techniques of arguments, as essential for composing theology. One particularly thought-provoking (and ironically original) section suggests that theologians in training should learn by imitating theological models.

Especially laudable is Griffiths’ section on antagonism and argument, which commends argument as “truly productive” and asserts that a serious failing of contemporary Catholic theological formation is the lack of engagement with opponents of one’s own positions. This theme of engagement with others appears at several points in the text, and it counts as one of the key advantages of Griffiths’ understanding of theology as open to nonbelievers. Surprisingly, these assertions come with an emphasis on the authority of magisterial teaching. Griffiths colorfully avers that, as one kisses the episcopal ring, theologians “should kiss the textual body of local episcopal teaching” (72). The tension between these two claims might be eased by his position that some theologians do not have an ecclesial vocation, but nonetheless stands out as one of the most interesting facets of the book.

While one might hope for more support for Griffiths’ substantive arguments—perhaps most frustrating is the lack of notes—this small book nonetheless makes for a compelling read sure to generate fruitful (and intense)

discussion. While the writing is accessible to undergraduates, and parts of the book may fit well into some courses, the overall thrust of the book seems better suited to those with an interest in pursuing careers in theology, which makes it an excellent resource for introductory graduate courses and for theologians and libraries.

ROBERT J. RYAN, JR.

The Catholic University of America

Beauty's Vineyard: A Theological Aesthetic of Anguish and Anticipation. By Kimberly Vrudny. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016. xxx + 264 pages. \$27.99.

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In her admirable work, *Beauty's Vineyard: A Theological Aesthetic of Anguish and Anticipation*, Kimberly Vrudny examines new and productive ways to consider the Trinity, theodicy, and ways in which Christians can live responsibly in a complex and sometimes painful world. Drawing on her undergraduate training in art history, as well as some personal experiences of heartache and religious questioning, Vrudny conceives of a formulation of Trinitarian doctrine that combines robust theology with an expansive, liberating perspective on human existence.

Vrudny begins with the Parable of the Tenants from the Gospel of Matthew, in which tenant farmers abuse and beat the slaves assigned to work in the fields. Later the same tenants go so far as to beat and kill the owner's own son. Jesus ends the parable by commenting that even the kingdom of God will be taken away from those to whom it was originally promised. How are readers to take this pronouncement? Vrudny asks. Are we to understand God as vindictive and violent, or is there another way to read such parables?

To answer this, Vrudny considers the variety of ways that the ugliness and fearsomeness of the world have been met with beauty, truth, and goodness. Her conception of the Christian triune God takes the form of Creator as goodness expressed in justice, the Son as beauty expressed in compassion, and Spirit as truth expressed in wisdom (42). In applying this formulation of the Trinity to the founding events of Christianity and to some seminal events of human history, Vrudny leads her readers on new paths of understanding of the Crucifixion, the suffering of innocents, and the best ways to wrestle with such difficult matters. The lessons of restorative justice practices from Africa, says Vrudny, allow us to reconcile justice and forgiveness, and will make room for reconciliation without further subjecting one another to the