

phetic critique (Paul Griffiths) or support of personal freedom and responsibility (Fred Dallmayr) rather than state sovereignty for intervening in another country's affairs. Owens' conclusion offers insightful suggestions for assisting "weak" or "failed" states to become more responsible actors among the family of nations.

The greatest weakness of this excellent collection is probably its title. A much more accurate and inviting title might be *Crossing National Boundaries: Religious and Political Issues*. An editors' note giving a fuller description of the events in Kosovo in the 1990s would also have helped to set the context for many of the essays, especially since the actions in Kosovo have been overshadowed by the terrorist acts of September 11, 2001 and subsequent events. Otherwise, this book would be a fine text for a course on religion and politics, religion in international affairs, or an ethics of warfare. Undergraduates will especially like its discussion of contemporary events and will find the brief biographies of the authors and the index helpful for their work. It should also be found in any academic library.

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*Catholics, Politics, and Public Policy: Beyond Left and Right*. By Clarke E. Cochran and David Carroll Cochran. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003. \$28.00 (paper).

In this concise volume, father and son set out to demonstrate how Catholic social principles can guide judgments about contemporary policy debates. The goal of the two political scientists is to bridge the gap "between the often abstract realm of Catholic social thought and the often obscure world of serious political study . . . in a way that avoids the shallow and partisan tone of so much political commentary today" (x-xi). The pair succeeds in fulfilling this tall order admirably.

The Cochrans' main contribution lies in their ability to link a cohesive social vision with concrete yet flexible policy proposals. While recognizing the legitimacy of many forms of Catholic engagement, they embrace a "creative and centrist" approach that works primarily through existing institutions. They ground their public church model in a Catholic social theory that emphasizes human dignity, a social anthropology, stewardship, option for the poor, and solidarity. They repeatedly draw upon subsidiarity while insisting on governmental responsibilities to promote common good. After a brief overview of Catholic social principles, chapters 2–9 treat a range of policy issues: economic justice, healthcare policy, family life, the elderly, crime and civic revitalization, racial and ethnic pluralism, the environment, and the sanctity of life. This configuration illustrates their own understanding of the wide-ranging nature of "life issues." Each chapter provides an overview of particular policy arenas, relevant Catholic principles, and concrete proposals. They include few direct citations but provide references at each chapter's end. This approach yields a readable if less scholarly tone, however statistic-heavy sections would benefit

from selective footnotes. Their recommended web sites represent a balanced range of organizations.

A noteworthy strength lies in the interconnections the authors reiterate among both Catholic principles and policy recommendations throughout (for example, linking issues of racial justice with economic justice and family policy). They repeatedly rely upon a characteristically Catholic, multidimensional approach, calling for collaboration among government, business, family, and civil society sectors (including faith-based organizations). The Cochrans draw upon official papal and episcopal documents, ideologically diverse theologians, and a large body of academic research on public policy. The book achieves a remarkable comprehensiveness given its manageable length, and it frequently succeeds in offering recommendations that genuinely move “beyond left and right.”

A more nuanced treatment of some of the text’s presuppositions would strengthen credibility. For example, the authors’ interpretation of Matthew 25 as requiring Catholics to minister to the least of these via structures of law, politics and public policy (1) proves a problematic starting point, especially given their praise of Catholic radicalism. They also touch upon “morality politics” without developing clear criteria for determining which policy issues warrant public deliberation and legislation and which remain matters of privacy (19-20). Incorporating a summarizing conclusion would further elucidate their overall proposals.

In the end, however, this volume offers an invaluable integration of Catholic social thought with concrete political realities. Its balanced and pragmatic approach provides a welcome antidote to polarizing rhetoric and abstract directives. The book would work well in upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses coupled with theological and ethical texts.

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KRISTIN E. HEYER

*Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action.* By Thomas Massaro, S.J. Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 2000. xi + 254 pages. \$14.95 (paper)

The author’s stated intention is to produce a single volume that answers the most obvious questions about Catholic social teaching that arise in the minds of people with little or no familiarity with the topic. The book accomplishes this in a manner that is clear, comprehensive, existentially engaging, thought-provoking, and even inspirational.

The first chapter raises such fundamental questions as what social justice is and why it ought to be a concern of religious people. The second discusses a rationale as well as pitfalls for people of faith speaking about public policy in a secular forum. The third chapter traces the history of social teaching that highlights major magisterial documents since *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and includes a helpful table of their dates, authorship, major challenges, and new ideas. The author also alludes to the roots of these teachings in earlier periods