

ways of human knowing” and “to make room for silence.” The criteria for judgment are “valuing the whole person” and “bringing balance and integration” (61). These are presented in a helpful “table” format at the outset and at the beginning of each chapter.

Boelhower is more concerned with right action than with right thinking and has built his proposal on three assumptions. First, Boelhower believes that, despite differences in theological claims about the divine or revelation, the treasury of the spiritual traditions is rich with wisdom and can serve as a significant resource for decision-making. Secondly, our spiritual and secular lives do not have to be in competition. Commonly held spiritual values across the continuum of religions, such as those concerning life, justice, and the dignity of the human person, can be used to promote the integrity of life at all levels. Finally, Boelhower holds that the task of wise decision-making is critical to the common good, and all must seek practical wisdom to flourish. Decision-making cannot be abdicated to authorities; all must participate in what can be a demanding process.

Boelhower’s text could serve students in a general moral theology course or supplement a world religions class. It is accessible and rich in engaging narratives and substantial references to primary sources from different religions, describing how each religious tradition has valued a particular principle. Each chapter contains questions for reflection and a personal assessment for readers to consider how they have integrated a representative principle into their lives. One could criticize the text for being too general in its approach to moral decision-making and for not focusing on a single religion. The text just admits the shared wellspring of wisdom from a number of religious traditions, but Boelhower acknowledges this limitation. Professors can use this opportunity to delve more deeply into interreligious questions with their students.

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*Monks and Muslims: Monastic and Shi’a Spirituality in Dialogue.* Edited by Mohammad Ali Shomali and William Skudlarek. Collegetown, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012. ix + 176 pages. \$19.95 (paper).

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Of the many books that deal with dialogue between Christians and Muslims, most focus on issues of dialogue between Christians and Sunni Muslims or between Christians and all Muslims. In general, works dealing specifically with Christian-Shi’ite relations are rare. This book, which is the

outcome of a 2011 conference, focuses on the possibilities of dialogue between Catholic monks and Shi'ite Muslims. It is thus a useful, if limited, addition to the literature. Structurally, the book pairs chapters exploring a theme, first from a Catholic monastic perspective and then in the Shi'ite tradition. The themes of these paired chapters include revelation, several aspects of prayer, witnessing, and dialogue. The Catholic chapters are written by practicing monks and nuns, and the Shi'ite chapters by intellectuals or academics most of whom have strong connections to the Shi'ite holy city of Qom in Iran. Given its structure and authors, the book very helpfully outlines some practical and theoretical aspects of spirituality in the Shi'ite tradition of Islam and Christian monastic life, showing that there are important similarities between the two. Hence, the book represents an important step toward more fruitful dialogue, not only between monks and nuns and Shi'ite Muslims, but also among Christians and Muslims more broadly. However, as a volume of conference papers, the book is fragmented, and there are many possible points of comparison that are not discussed; for instance, a chapter on the mystical dimensions of both traditions would have been especially illuminating.

Another drawback of the book is that its intended audience is not well developed. As the authors included represent a mix of academic and professional backgrounds, the book is not highly academic in itself, yet is presented in an academic style, including references and footnotes. That said, the book seems geared more to an educated, nonacademic audience than an academic one. The best academic use for this book would be a practice-oriented theological studies course, especially if that course included or wished to include a comparative or dialogic element. With the lack of alternative references on Shi'ite-Christian relations, the book could also be beneficial for those in theology and religious studies departments, especially for individuals who are interested in comparative spirituality.

One additional note is in order. The book specifically mentions only the Shi'ite tradition; there is no mention of the Sunni tradition, which is very far-reaching and has many similarities to the mystical tradition of Christianity. Admittedly, including Sunni perspectives would have greatly increased the length of the book and might have changed its character, but at only 164 pages, the book is relatively short, and such an addition would have significantly improved its value to wider Christian-Muslim dialogue. All in all, though, the book presents a decent starting point for thinking about dialogue between Christians and Shi'ite Muslims.

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