

The second half of the book is Sanford's effort to encourage a closer look at Aristotle's understanding of virtue as the excellence of a set of functions, and consequently the necessary unity and focus of a virtuous human life. Here, he is strongly influenced by Alasdair MacIntyre, as they both share an effort to defend the central tenets of Aristotle's psychology and teleology. He also suggests ten principles that capture the core of Aristotle's ethics, the neglect of which establishes a range by which contemporary virtues ethicists stray from Aristotle. The list is a good one, and a very neat summary for those teaching Aristotle's ethics to undergraduates. In his list, Sanford is sensitive to the interdependency of ethics and politics in the older community-building sense. Unfortunately, this sensitivity leads him to reverse the order of importance of justice and friendship, a sacrifice of Aristotle's clarity about the importance of the unity of character in relationships over the balance of distributed goods.

Overall, *Before Virtue* is a solid, well-researched, and clearly presented work of scholarship. In particular, there is much to be learned about Aristotle's ethics, including the efforts to modernize it, and the solid reasons for understanding Aristotle as a powerful alternative to discussions of deontology and utilitarianism.

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*Passions and Virtue*. By Servais Pinckaers, OP. Translated by Benedict M. Guevin, OSB. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2015. ix + 139 pages. \$65.00.  
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*Passions and Virtue* is a brief volume that represents, in the language of the foreword, "a follow-up to *A Plea for Virtue*" (vii), one of Pinckaers' earlier works. The connections are clear from the beginning, as Pinckaers suggests in his introduction that the study of the virtues naturally, and necessarily, leads to an examination of the role of the passions in the moral life. The book as a whole effectively makes this case, reasserting Thomas Aquinas' vision of virtuous passions as a middle way between the Stoics, who insisted that the virtuous life requires suppression of one's passions, and contemporaries who might suggest that how one feels can never be subject to moral scrutiny.

Throughout the text, Pinckaers is clear and precise, especially in his definitions. The first chapter is no exception, as Pinckaers offers a systematic assessment of passion in relation to more familiar terms like sentiment and

emotion in order to arrive at a definition of a passion as “an enduring affective state” (1). The centrality of Aquinas connects this affective state with a kind of movement in the moral life, either away from or toward the good, creating the foundation for Pinckaers’ insistence that virtue ethics envisions the moderation, transformation, and integration of human passions into a life well lived. The notion of movement also undergirds the list of specific passions (chapter 2) examined in the book, for Pinckaers derives his list from Aquinas, adding piety and rearranging the categories slightly so that he can treat certain passions as a subspecies of a particular movement. (For example, Pinckaers links concupiscence and hope in chapter 5 because, he explains, every movement of desire contains within it the hope of achieving that for which it longs.)

In terms of structure, the book effectively has two halves, although there is not an explicit delineation between them. The first consists of the introductory chapters (1–2) plus five chapters (3–7) that explicitly treat the passions identified in Aquinas’ moral system, offering an accessible definition of each and a reasonable defense of the ways they can reinforce virtue. The second involves eight chapters (8–15) examining a variety of quotidian human experiences in relation to virtue. These are humor, silence, anger (admittedly, one of Aquinas’ original passions), piety, work, rest, sport, and psychology. Each represents an underanalyzed topic in moral theology, as Pinckaers points out, and all deserve more scrutiny, but the connections between them are not as direct as they could be, and the links to the passions are a bit unclear—although here Pinckaers seems to appeal to the fact that these are things about which people are often “passionate” in the colloquial sense. The risk of eclecticism is especially noticeable in contrast to the first half, where the Thomistic framework provides a clearly articulated coherence.

In the individual chapters, Pinckaers not only defines his terms but also reviews competing positions on the best way to address the passion or issue in moral terms before adding his own critical reflection and assessment. The chapters are short, and each one reads like a meditation more than a treatise. This will likely disappoint some readers looking for a thorough scholarly analysis of the relationship between passions and virtue, of the sort that a number of contemporary moral theologians are offering on specific passions. One should hardly hold this style against Pinckaers, however, for two reasons. First, even as meditations, the chapters are not without substance. Pinckaers deftly summarizes a number of technical issues in Aquinas, moving beyond the jargon to provide comprehensible explanations. Indeed, his account of delectation in the *Summa* is such an impressive distillation of a complex question that the book is a justifiable library addition on the basis of those pages (39–42) alone. Second, Pinckaers himself prescinds from comprehensiveness as a goal, hoping instead “to help the reader advance

in self-understanding" (ix). Measured against this aim, the text is a success, and would likely benefit even undergraduate students—albeit with a bit of introduction to virtue—for we can all use further encouragement for integration in a culture that tends toward fragmentation.

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*Structures of Grace: Catholic Organizations Serving the Global Common Good.*  
 By Kevin Ahern. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2015. 224 pages. \$35.00 (paper).  
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Theology, as a discipline, most often studies the work of individuals. More often neglected are the theological contributions of movements. A former president of the International Movement of Catholic Students, Ahern is intimately familiar with both the possibilities and the challenges of Christian social movements that wed the spiritual mission of the church to the practical task of effecting justice in the world. Ahern argues that these movements can be “structures of grace,” a term that draws on the more familiar “structures of sin”—the idea that sin is not only located in the human will, but in social institutions, attitudes, and interactions that perpetuate injustice even in the absence of malicious actors. As the book’s title suggests, just as sin can reside both in human hearts and in social structures, so too can God’s grace act in and through social institutions such as these movements. These structures of grace can actively counteract the structures of sin. The purpose of the work is to “be a resource for both theologians and members of Christian social movements to help them better understand what God may be doing in their midst” (8).

The twin audiences of this book—theologians and members of movements—are addressed in the book’s two goals: (1) to develop a theology of structural grace and (2) to help movement members to discern God’s will for them and how to follow God’s will. Ahern begins by examining the histories, structures, and purposes of three Christian social movements—Jesuit Refugee Services, Young Christian Workers, and Plowshares. After this overview, Ahern draws on papal encyclicals, the documents of Vatican II, and the work of several liberation theologians to make some initial steps toward a “theology of structural grace.” While this material will be of interest to theologians, this section of the book skates over some important differences between various magisterial and liberationist accounts of structures of sin. Theologians, popes, and episcopal conferences disagree about the role of individual agency in structural sin, for example, but Ahern never explains which account of structural sin he is drawing on and why.