

serving in soup kitchens, tutoring in underfunded schools, or working with people experiencing homelessness, these experiences foster deep personal reflection, especially when students witness the suffering of their neighbors up close. Additionally, Bergman emphasizes the powers of moral exemplars—such as Dorothy Day, St. Oscar Romero, or Martin Luther King, Jr.—in showing the virtues people may need to acquire as they confront a world “riddled with injustice, violence, and suffering” (115).

Bergman suggests that universities are uniquely positioned to offer these transformational experiences. Drawing on the writings of St. John Henry Newman and St. Ignatius of Loyola, he insists that education is not an end in itself but should be a catalyst to change the world. In this expanded edition, *Catholic Social Learning* remains a crucial resource, especially for educators seeking to integrate Catholic social teaching into people’s daily lives and foster the “culture of encounter” for which Pope Francis has been advocating. However, given the evolving landscape of Catholic higher education, it may be time to reconsider the role of Catholic universities as vehicles for change. With many students themselves belonging to vulnerable populations, it is worth exploring how the virtues learned in social justice work might be practiced both within and beyond the university setting.

JENS MUELLER

Notre Dame of Maryland University

A Primer in Christian Ethics: Christ and the Struggle to Live Well. By Luke Bretherton. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. vii + 377 pages. \$34.99.

The term *primer* can have multiple meanings across varied fields, referring to an introductory text for new students, a guide to a previously unknown domain, a devotional manual, and even (in chemistry) a catalyst for reactions that generate new compounds. Luke Bretherton’s aspirations in his new volume incorporate all these valences, though perhaps the last (the laboratory sense) is the most prominent. In the final chapter Bretherton admits, “I am aware that throughout this book I raise more questions than I answer” (360), suggesting that the goal of the book is to use classic concepts from Christian ethics to spur novel kinds of theo-political reflection. In this sense, it follows the lineage of Bretherton’s colleague Stanley Hauerwas, whose *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics* moved well beyond explaining introductory concepts to the task of constructive and controversial ethical analysis.

The similarities between Bretherton's and Hauerwas's approaches extend beyond title and format. Both draw from the deep well of virtue ethics tradition and apply the Christian vision of the good life not only to personal but also political issues. Also like his predecessor, Bretherton refuses to reduce Christian ethics to formulaic casuistry.

This does not mean, however, that Bretherton dodges practical questions by tethering his analysis to the lofty realms of theory alone. His first chapter begins with specific acts of violence (the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre of 1572 and the mass shooting by Dylann Roof in 2015 at Emmanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina), and throughout the book Bretherton grounds all his ethical concepts to precise political and social issues, especially environmental and economic ones. The *cantus firmus* is that humans learn about God and ethics by walking "interlaced pathways" composed of a "meshwork of physical, biotic, social, and spiritual relations" (13), and therefore that all Christian concepts are inseparable from political ramifications. In each chapter Bretherton explores diverse ethical themes by investigating not only their biblical and magisterial origins but also their relatedness to contemporary questions. Striking examples of this novel approach include his "metabolic" analysis of the *imago Dei* concept (32–39), in which he argues that the famed Genesis idea not only tempers the "dominion" of humans over nature, but also the throughput avenues humans occupy within nature.

Another unique contribution that goes beyond most previous ethical primers is the attentiveness to the liberationist tradition of Christian theology, framed as the virtue of "being hospitable to strangers" (91). Bretherton is not the first theologian to link liberation theology to virtue ethics—the tradition of "spiritualities of liberation" found in Gustavo Gutiérrez, James Cone, Roberto Goizueta, and even Martin Luther King, Jr., includes this element, as well—but Bretherton provides an ecological twist that adds a new layer of metaphysical grounding to the relationship between political advocacy and Christian moral formation. Bretherton shows how the organic interconnections between human communities necessitate intentional listening to downplayed voices, as well as critical self-awareness of how often those of us "whose behaviors and bodies comport with what is deemed normal or socially correct feel (our) behaviors are simply good, right, and proper" (92–93). The connection Bretherton forges between liberationist politics and virtue ethics is helpful for addressing the subtle tendency of the latter to reinforce modes of life privileging specific traditions and virtues such as those established by wealthy white men, or westerners in general.

As a textbook, the wide-ranging and practical qualities of Bretherton's book will make it ideal for classroom use. However,

although Bretherton's writing is admirably clear and relatively jargon-free, its main drawback is that it regularly alludes to writers and theological paradigms a student would need to understand prior to grasping the main thrust of the work. For example, Bretherton's fascinating exploration of "vocation and neighbor love" (164–171) pulls ideas from Barth, Kierkegaard, and Bonhoeffer in ways that would likely not make sense to a reader unfamiliar with these authors. For this reason, the book might be best used in graduate school and seminary ethics classes, or possibly in advanced undergraduate courses.

From a scholarly angle, this work will prove essential reading for theologians and ethicists interested in finding untrodden common ground between the aretaic tradition and liberation theology. Bretherton's skillful fusing of ancient wisdom with modern ecological and radical political thought will serve as an excellent model for scholars exploring what he calls "God's great economy of creaturely life" (311).

ANDREW BLOSSER
Marquette University

The Eucharistic Vision of Laudato Si': Praise, Conversion, and Integral Ecology. By Lucas Briola. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2023. ix + 277 pages. \$34.95.

The ecological crisis that ravages communities, nations, and even individual families presents not only an immediate practical dilemma in how to address issues such as property damage and loss of life for those affected by environmental destruction, but also an existential and theological quandary in how we envision ourselves *vis-à-vis* the rest of creation. In *The Eucharistic Vision of Laudato Si'*, Lucas Briola adeptly identifies that, in order for our praxis to change in how we care for and nurture the rest of creation, we must fundamentally provide a robust practical wisdom that seeks the integration of all of creation toward a doxological vision.

Briola argues that the Eucharistic moment serves as a matrix between the healing capacities of God's grace and the creative flourishing of creation's praise, one which should act as locus for the transformation of values for the embodied expression of what Pope Francis describes as "culture of care" (222). Briola develops this argument in light of, first, the pastoral needs arising from the global ecological crisis and, second, the tumultuous reception of Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'* in his native United States of America. In utilizing Bernard Lonergan's theoretical framework to provide an *explanatory* rather than *descriptive* account of a hoped-for notion of integral ecology (107), Briola outlines categories of thought