

proportion between the scaffolding of a building (law) and the open space in which human activity transpires (virtue)” (362).

Other contributions will surprise readers in encountering familiar thinkers anew. Although Martin Buber (1878–1965) is rarely read as a virtue ethicist, William Plevan notes Buber’s overall concern with perfection as “the self-actualization of each human being’s unique personality” (370) and names accordingly openness and dialogical responsiveness as key dispositions in that pursuit. Buber’s notion of dialogue can also be founded in ways humanity is drawn into imitation of “divine *middot*, or attributes, of clothing the naked, visiting the sick, comforting mourners, and burying the dead” (378).

Similarly fruitful, Ned Curthoys situates the works of Hannah Arendt (1906–1975) in the Jewish “pariah tradition.” It is well known that Arendt endeavored to elaborate how the pursuit of excellence involves skills of practical reasoning and intellectual virtues to aid conscience’s capacity to judge, deliberate, and act. Retrieving Aristotle, furthermore, her conception of the good life is formulated in terms of human dignity and self-care, not selflessness. As an outsider who resists anti-Semitism and all forms of dehumanization, Curthoys poignantly stresses Arendt’s admiration for Socrates as “*the* exemplary philosopher, a courageous, dialogically motivated, and publicly engaged intellectual remembered for his close friendships” (428). In a particularly Jewish way, Curthoys’s Arendt accordingly employs the “critical perspective of the outsider among one’s people and rebels against injustices inflicted on oppressed people more generally” (436).

At times, the experience of reading this book is like digesting an annotated anthology. Ultimately, however, it lends itself well to precisely what is identified as the basic goal of Jewish-Christian dialogue by the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews: “One can only learn to love what one has gradually come to know, and one can only know truly and profoundly what one loves” (no. 44). Indeed, that learning is best done in dialogue and friendship. For moral theology, at the very least, this book signifies an invitation to a gradual deepening and possibly the mutual enrichment between our virtue traditions.

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The Catholic Case Against War: A Brief Guide. By David Carroll Cochran. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2024. ix + 182 pages. \$32.00 (paperback).

With this volume David Carroll Cochran has done a service for Catholics and others interested in a faith-based appraisal of war by

laying out a focused exploration of the church's teaching about the failures of the resort to war. The author guides readers through a largely socio-political exploration of the church's critical stance toward the contemporary waging of war. For Catholics, people of other faiths, and all those of good will, Cochran focuses the conversation on the moral illegitimacy and evils of war. He directs our attention to war's lies, destruction, and dehumanizing consequences, and points toward available alternatives to armed conflict.

The author notes that his purposes are to draw together Vatican documents that comprise the church's case against war itself, and to showcase the practicality of this case. Chapters 1 and 2 lay out an analysis of the false promises and death which attend war. Chapters 3 through 5 describe political and economic strategies for preventing and even abolishing war.

One of the strengths of the book is that Cochran pulls together stimulating research in a readable and teachable form, drawing on examples from around the world and multiple conflicts, including both world wars, Iraq, Libya, and Vietnam. Each chapter starts by highlighting church teachings, then turns to other sources to provide political, economic, legal, and historical analysis.

Cochran delivers a powerful reading of papal condemnations of suffering caused by war and preparation for war, the destruction of morality, and the dehumanization of all touched by armed conflict. He notes that the waging of war engenders a dangerous epistemology with false promises of war's governability, guarantees of success, the nobility of "our side," and the safeguarding of justice. Rather, war provokes future wars, violence, destruction, and deception. In chapter 2, the author argues that the renunciation of violence bears witness to the truth, and he provides illustrative examples of nonviolent civil resistance—in places such as Belarus, India, Iran, the Philippines, Poland, South Africa, and Thailand—while recognizing varying degrees of "success" in these nonviolent efforts to resolve large-scale violence.

Cochran highlights strategies for promoting solidarity, mutual aid, and dialogue in the political, legal, and economic domains, with the likelihood of preventing particular wars from starting. Efforts within individual countries around the globe can build structures of peace and promote virtues that stand against a reflexive recourse to warmaking. The author acknowledges that these efforts reflect a long perspective, yet there is always something to be done right now.

The book implicitly reasons from a Catholic social teaching framework that the Catholic case against war is focused on transforming social structures, including on a global level, to make the outbreak of war less likely. We read in chapter 5 an argument that, just as once widely accepted practices of institutionalized violence

(including the death penalty, trial by combat, duels, and chattel slavery) were largely eliminated, so too a world without war is better than one with it. He further makes the point that this condition is possible, if not entirely probable. A helpful component of Cochran's analysis is his clarification of what a world without war does *not* mean. It would not mean an end to injustice, political violence, or national greed.

The list of texts provided as Recommended Reading, as well as in the Notes, Works Cited, and Index, are invaluable for the reader interested in learning more. The list of Vatican documents and papal statements is especially useful. Other cited texts are drawn from the works of multiple scholars, largely though not exclusively from the 2000s.

I highly recommend study of this book. Cochran provides a good primer with a political focus. The text is a good fit for undergraduate and graduate college courses, as well as parish reading groups and adult faith formation. The title might have been a bit sharper, perhaps along the lines of 'The Contemporary Catholic Socio-Political Case Against War.' In addition to politics, we can point to other sympathetic arguments from the church for peacemaking and against war, such as the World Day of Peace Messages from Pope Francis which emphasize cultivating fraternity, engaging in practices of dialogue, and building a culture of solidarity and mercy. A whole series of guides of similar length and structure but with different starting points, such as the abolition of war and promotion of peace in relation to the sacraments and liturgical participation or to an understanding of the church as a pilgrim people of hope, would be another wonderful resource for teachers and catechists. Right now, though, we can read and study this book with others and follow along where it brings us.

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Parenting: The Complex and Beautiful Vocation of Raising Children.
By Holly Taylor Coolman. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2024.
xv + 144 pages. \$21.99.

The last several decades have seen a dramatic change in the field of moral theology as the percentage of specialists became predominantly lay. Thus, many moral theologians have first-hand experience in an area of crucial ecclesiological and moral importance: parenting. Duties and failures of parents are not exactly a new topic in moral theology, nor is the notion of the family as domestic church.