

theological account of practical reason. Although O'Donovan's dense prose and intricate argumentation can at times prove challenging, diligent readers will find themselves richly rewarded with the many insights he has gleaned over the course of his long and distinguished career. Perhaps the most significant contribution of the book is its extended discussion of what O'Donovan calls the "temporal positioning of moral thought" (41). In response to Lord Gifford's call for a natural theology—the impetus for the Gifford Lectures—*The Disappearance of Ethics* builds upon O'Donovan's earlier explorations of this topic in the *Ethics as Theology* trilogy and *Resurrection and Moral Order* by attempting to rehabilitate Kant's argument for the necessity of "moral faith," understood as the "belief that the ultimate course of events will in the end prove hospitable to, and vindicate, the efforts of moral life and action" (43). While some moral theologians might understandably wish for a more critical examination of this concept and the God whose existence it postulates, they would nevertheless do well to reflect on O'Donovan's provocative suggestion that every moral agent must "choose either to live by moral faith or to embrace moral cynicism" (150). At the very least, they ought to commend O'Donovan for having successfully shown that the future of ethics as an intellectual discipline rests on its ability to grapple with the future-oriented nature of moral deliberation.

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Ecological Moral Character: A Catholic Model. By Nancy M. Rourke. Georgetown University Press, 2024. 184 pages. \$49.95.

The Great Commandment to love God and one's neighbor as oneself has resulted in an anthropocentric concentration in the Christian moral life. To combat this trend, some secular and religious virtue ethicists have highlighted the moral goodness of nature and how to establish moral habits that reflect our interdependence with creation. Following the publication of Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'* in 2015, more Catholic moral theologians have responded to his call for an integral ecology. But there has been nothing as comprehensive as what Nancy Rourke has produced. Drawing from an exceptional grasp of Catholic virtue ethics and the work of pioneer ecological virtue ethicist Louke van Wensveen, this book is destined to be a classic at the intersection of fundamental moral theology and ecological ethics.

Rourke's book is relevant, accessible, and impressive. She writes like a seasoned teacher who imparts her specialization in an intelligible style, sprinkling compelling examples into the argument

she makes so well. Rourke introduces the book as striving to provide a good model of moral character, not just to fill in ecological gaps in virtue theory, but to expand our imagination for delivering on the moral demands of integral ecology. The first chapter offers a clear overview of virtue theory and models of moral character, arguing for an ecological model of moral character “to help the moral growth of the people in their contexts of time and space” in the pursuit of increasing ecological awareness (14). The second chapter examines ecosystems, their interrelationality, and how they behave, relying on four characteristics—causality, borders and boundaries, nestedness, and niches—to illustrate the dimensions and interactions of a person’s moral character.

After using these traits to frame a model of moral character as an ecosystem, the third chapter discusses the structure and dynamic of this model by drawing parallels between ecosystems and moral character. Here Rourke considers the significance of causality that is weak, diffuse, complex, and reciprocal, not just for ecosystems but in moral character, as between the intellect and will, for example. She acknowledges that all boundaries in ecosystems are vague and porous, just as is the case in moral character, demonstrated by the passions, boundaries between moral agents, and between people and God. Turning to nestedness, Rourke notes how moral character is situated within a wider social context that “constantly allow[s] seepage” between individual moral character and the moral character of one’s society (45). This helpful presentation of moral agency (with references to moral luck and critical realism) sets up an ecological model of moral character where virtues are like nexuses of a web, allowing for the fact that interactions and relationships between moral virtues and vices differ within each moral agent, while helping us fill and create niches in our ecological and social context. Rourke explains, “Our virtues and vices adjust to our contexts. The niches that are occupied by the virtues and vices of our moral character likewise respond to our contexts. They also motivate and inspire us to fill certain exterior niches offered by these contexts. . . . The niches offered by our contexts motivate our moral, intellectual, and theological development” (55). This depicts how a “virtues ecology” is shaped by and shapes the moral character of those who participate in sharing life together.

With this foundation in place, chapter four pivots to the theological virtues as a conduit for the moral agent to receive God’s self-giving love, rooting a person in the source of all goodness. Rourke describes faith, hope, and charity as a “virtues community [that] is a locus where human agency and divine agency combine,” an “interplay, a fertilizing coming together, that feeds, informs, and inspires a person’s moral life” in the direction of moral growth (62, 75). The next two chapters

are dedicated to prudence and justice, temperance and fortitude respectively. These chapters cite and respond to van Wensveen's four sets of ecological cardinal virtues: position, attunement, care, and endurance. Rourke insists that ecological responsibility cannot be satisfied by any list of specific virtues without providing a model for a healthy integration in creation. This book is up to the task, providing a strong guide to "develop a complex web of interacting virtue nexuses and to enhance that complexity by adding to our virtues" by presenting "our moral character as an active community with many different participants . . . and new ways to imagine how we might collaborate with the sacred itself in our tilling and keeping of a most important garden: who and what we are" (105).

The final chapter is a rewarding payoff, as it showcases the ecological model of moral character. Rourke touts wonder, integrity, and solidarity as three virtues showing "the intimate relationships and ecological dynamics between the participants of a good moral character" (112). She dedicates several pages to the treatment of ecological virtue ethics in *Laudato Si'* and the evolution of integral ecology through the papacies of John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis. Rourke concludes with a very brief look at three examples of ecological moral character in action: at a Catholic university (a sustainability initiative at Canisius University, a collaboration of faculty, staff, and students), in a faith community (a summer camp near Adirondack lakes, thanks to the ministry of Reverend Kent Busman), and the moral heroism of an individual (Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, a pediatrician whose research raised alarm bells over lead levels in the water supply in Flint, Michigan). Like small portions of a delectable meal, these examples left me hungry for more. I expect this book will find a wide and eager audience; I hope it will inspire more scholarship on how we can integrate an ecological moral character into our relationships and shared practices. Our integral flourishing relies on it.

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The Ethics of Precision Medicine: The Problems of Prevention in Healthcare. By Paul Scherz. University of Notre Dame Press, 2024. xiv + 194 pages. \$40.00 (hardcover).

Precision has always been an aim of good medical practice. After all, no two patients are exactly the same. Thus, any therapeutic regimen, no matter how broadly successful, will always need to be tailored to the specific constitution and circumstances of the person seeking medical help. Hence the importance, among other things, of