

and relationality can inform pastoral responses that validate human suffering, critique dehumanizing uses of technology, and propose ethical alternatives that respect agency and community, movements that can be used by ministers to accompany the faithful in adopting practices that cultivate attentiveness, presence, and care in a digitally saturated environment.

Encountering Artificial Intelligence is an important and timely intervention: measured, theologically serious, and pastorally minded. It supplies a framework for assessing AI that refuses easy binaries, insisting on sustained ethical discernment grounded in doctrine and human praxis. For theologians, ethicists, and ministers seeking resources to navigate the moral landscape of contemporary technology, this volume is indispensable. If the Church is to be a constructive presence in the shaping of technological futures, these are the kinds of conversations it must continue through the twenty-first century.

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The Family as Basic Social Unit: Living Out Catholic Social Teaching. By Kevin Schemenauer. The Catholic University of America Press, 2024, xvi + 277 pages. \$85.00 hardcover, \$34.95 paperback, \$34.95 e-book.

In *The Family as Basic Social Unit: Living Out Catholic Social Teaching*, Kevin Schemenauer offers an exhaustive analysis of the role of the family in society. His argument relies on the principles of Catholic Social Teaching with a particular focus on aspects specifically related to Church teaching on the family. He draws from concepts of the relationship between society and family developed by renowned voices in contemporary scholarship, such as Lisa Sowle Cahill, David Matzko McCarthy, Florence Caffrey Bourg, and Julie Hanlon Rubio. These foundational ideas offer the starting point for Schemenauer to further develop and refine his analysis of the inherent social character and social interdependence of families. From a magisterial perspective, the author finds great value in Pope Francis's teaching on the family's social character and responsibilities of members of the family for society. Francis emphasizes the close relationship between the Church, families, and society, leading Schemenauer to expound upon the significance of their mutual interaction and influence. Ultimately, the author argues that families are the basic cell of society and the Church; thus, he highlights the societal role of families in serving Jesus Christ. Schemenauer's argument both challenges and guides families toward a deeper faith in

God with a responsibility to promote the common good and care for poor.

Drawing from magisterial teaching, Schemenauer analyzes two concepts of the family as internally social and as socially interdependent with other social communities. With an emphasis on Catholic social teaching, he applies Church teaching on the dignity of work and labor in the household context. He emphasizes the legitimacy and rigor of household work to counter gender-biased perspectives that are often dismissive of the role of a housewife. Likewise, the author incorporates an analysis of domestic conflict and violence through the lens of Catholic peacemaking principles to draw parallels between societal and civil violence with conflict in family life. Thus, mercy must be practiced in the household and with familial interaction with larger society to live out Jesus' statement that "I did not come to be served but to serve and to give life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Schemenauer accentuates the social interdependence of the family, yet recognizes the toxic influence of consumerism which leads to the distortion of sexual desire and love. Ultimately, this text highlights the virtue of simplicity as the core purpose of family life in unity through social engagement and the love of God.

Schemenauer's argument is constructed on a foundation of the role of family in society in Catholic social ethics. The author hopes to present these ethical applications in a practical context. The book is organized to systematically explore various facets of family ethics in two distinct parts. The first three chapters focus on the internal social character of families. He begins with the central principle of the family as a basic social unit that describes how families re-image God's love in the family and in society through theological charity. Schemenauer outlines the magisterial social principles rooted to create a strong framework that reflects the real life of families. He then adroitly turns to acts of service between family members as works of mercy to show that families will benefit from social principles which "animate justice and mercy" (112). The second half of the book includes four additional chapters which examine the social interdependence of families in the context of social interaction and the influence of societal systems. This foundation helps the author to construct a theological framework for communal engagement that stresses the virtue of simplicity to unite people in God's love. Schemenauer concludes that families have a "unique responsibility" to practice the call of the Gospel for expressing a preferential care for the poor (248). He articulates how this is manifested through both individual and collective obligations.

This text makes a significant contribution to moral theology by illustrating the correlation between Church teaching on the family with its social teaching, particularly as it relates to the poor.

Schemenauer artfully makes these connections by connecting the responsibilities of individuals and families with society through cultural influences that ultimately rest in an obligation for a “preferential care for the poor” (3). The framework provides a broader context to understand how the family is threatened by a culture of consumerism that can cause a loss of compassion for the sufferings of others. The author offers several ways that families can participate in building the common good at the local and global level in response to the symptoms and trends in a contemporary culture of death. These opportunities are an alternative to an inclination to avoid seeing the need to care for the poor if “we limit our moral analysis to individual actions” (205). Thus, the connections between social and family ethics rely on the interrelation between individual, family, and social responsibilities.

Breaking from traditional approaches to moral theology that reflect on individual actions or social structure and social sins, Schemenauer creatively focuses on how the family carries in itself a moral agency where virtues are formed and lived out. One example of this is through an analysis of peacemaking that highlights the parallels of societal political violence and domestic conflict. Schemenauer effectively correlates these themes by showing that political motivations must be linked with “moral motivations in order to encourage justice” in both society and the family (83). The author accomplishes this by bringing the themes of Catholic social teaching related to political and economic issues as they are applied to the family life. For example, he applies the principles of dignity of work, solidarity, mercy, and peacemaking into family life to examine spousal relationships and their effect on the moral life by how they participate in the Church’s mission of serving the poor.

Although this book offers a thoughtful analysis and welcome connection between ethical analysis of the family and Catholic social teaching, Schemenauer writes from a decidedly Western perspective. Unfortunately, this lack of considering more specific cultural differences in family structures and societal expectations of Asian or African families limits the broader applicability and possible conclusions. For example, his analysis of the family seems to rely on an assumption of the nuclear family in a household which does not reflect the generational nature of many families in other parts of the world. Likewise, relying on the family as a basic social unit to form and practice morality avoids the reality of negative factors such as domestic violence that are socially accepted in many parts of the world. Although Schemenauer affirms women’s dignity in household work, he fails to acknowledge perspectives of feminist theologians that note how cultural constraints limit women in many parts of the

world to such work. Nevertheless, the book remains a valuable starting point for discussions related to the family and social injustice.

Schemenauer successfully connects moral theology and Catholic social teaching by demonstrating how the family is not only a private reality, but a basic cell of society. His clear and concise language is founded on theological principles but presented in a straightforward manner that is relatable to both scholars and casual readers. Schemenauer remains faithful to magisterial teaching yet offers fresh insights that offer both scholarly and pastoral application. This text can be a source of discussion for social engagement while encouraging families to actively live out the Gospel and Catholic social teaching. While grounded in the Catholic traditions, Schemenauer's insight can enrich discussions in sociology, ethics, and public policy through its perspectives on the importance of family.

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Political Theology Based in Community: Dorothy Day, the Catholic Worker Movement, and Overcoming Otherness. By Marty Tomszak. Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2023. vii + 265 pages. \$110 hardcover, \$79.20 e-book.

With this work, Marty Tomszak brings the Catholic Worker tradition into dialogue with radical political theology—or it may be more appropriate to state that he reveals how the Catholic Worker movement can move political theology beyond the realm of theory.

Tomszak wants to move political theology, and theology as a whole, toward a space of “admitting weakness and rejecting sovereignty” (1). Though this is a work of theology, it relies heavily on current radical strands of continental philosophy. Tomszak's foundation is giving priority to the Other as a way for individuals to gain self-understanding. He utilizes the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, who argued that we discover who we are and uncover the foundations for ethical action in the conversations that we have with the Other. While Levinas imagines sharing intellectual space with the Other, Catholic Worker cofounder Dorothy Day took this one step further by also sharing physical space with the Other.

Building on this, Tomszak explores the thought of philosophers John Caputo and Richard Kearney to showcase the hospitality of Jesus as the way we can connect to the Other and the divine. Hospitality highlights the low Christology of Caputo and Kearney and their focus on divine weakness as opposed to omnipotence. Similarly, the Catholic Worker has advocated that we grow in our relationship with God through our service to and solidarity with the poor. Tomszak finds