
Bernard V. Brady. *Be Good and Do Good: Thinking Through Moral Theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2014.

Bernard Brady, a faculty member at St. Thomas University and a veteran classroom professor of moral theology, offers a fine introduction to the field in this compact, informative, and formative volume. As he makes clear in the introduction, he seeks to aid conscientious consideration of moral issues, providing a conceptual map for moral discernment.

The organization of the book around the key conceptual hooks of freedom, relationality and love, actions and persons, and conscience, held in conversation with a framework for identifying types of ethical discourse, leads the reader step by step through a very cogent, synthetic account of moral theology. Brady carefully lays out his understanding of the structure of the field in terms of theology, anthropology, morality, and appropriation, encouraging readers to discern and claim their own moral identity, much in the style of Richard Gula's *Reason Informed by Faith*, one of Brady's conversation partners. Like any effective teaching tool, the text embodies and demonstrates the method that it describes, taking readers through a process of moral discernment as part of ongoing formation of conscience.

Other interlocutors include Thomas Aquinas, Vatican II texts, Martin Luther King, Jr., Maya Angelou, William Cavanaugh, Jean Porter, James Keenan, Cathleen Kaveny, Bryan Massingale, John XXIII, John Paul II, and Pope Francis. To a field marked by significant ideological divisions in the last half-century around methodological (and ultimately ecclesiological) issues such as consequentialist reasoning, Brady's volume brings a nuanced and balanced tone.

In his treatment of intrinsically evil acts (123 ff.), for example, Brady explains the concept in an evenhanded manner, without losing those new to the field in the jargon of *materia circa quam*. Undergraduates might not emerge from studying this text with mastery of the Latin lingo of moral theology, but they will be able to articulate what is at stake in defining what is included in the description of the object of an act, one of the central points of debate about intrinsically evil acts. Brady also takes care to note social manifestations of the concept, thereby extending the traditional discourse in a manner intelligible in the contemporary context.

One would be hard pressed to locate Brady's approach to this topic, or other contested topics in moral theology, in any one camp. His broad vision of the field and its relationship to other areas of theology in fact offers ground for hope that the guild can move past its more neuralgic debates and remember its pastoral roots.

An important contribution of this volume is that it offers a pastoral account of moral theology attuned to the significance of cultural context and social location. In one instance, Brady explores Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" as a beautiful masterpiece of ethical reasoning. He carefully explicates the different ethical arguments deployed there and notes the variety of audiences to whom King was appealing (24-26). Brady is teaching the material as he goes, to good effect. One can hear the rich classroom discussion that might ensue after reading this chapter, including the possibility of addressing contemporary challenges of racial justice in particular societal and ecclesial contexts.

Indeed, the practice of careful listening to the positions of others as part of personal and communal formation in moral identity emerges as a central insight of this text. Whether one prefers narrative, prophetic language, reasoned ethical argumentation, or a pragmatic policy approach, the goal in deploying each kind of moral discourse is the same: to love what and how God loves (171).

Brady builds the argument of the book gradually, tracing the significance of culture from the person socially situated in Chapter 1 (32, 37) to the institutional and communal aspects of the moral life in later chapters (e.g., 63, 69, 129). In the process, he refers to many relevant examples that often surface in classroom discussions, e.g., the Catholic Church's sexual abuse crisis.

Be Good and Do Good: Thinking through Moral Theology is clearly written in an accessible style, and strikes a graceful balance between pastoral and academic concerns. Thoughtful discussion questions at the end of each chapter enhance the text's value for the undergraduate classroom setting as well as for ecclesial formation groups.

Margaret R. Pfeil, Associate Professional Specialist, Moral Theology/
Christian Ethics, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana