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# The Word In and Out of Season

Eduard R. Riegert

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sin is a deadly and contagious virus which threatens, saps and debilitates our moral and spiritual health and lives" (113).

5 *Sin as disease*: In this model, sin and sickness get correlated at the level of disease, which is regarded as an invasion of the body by evil. In ascertaining whether this model has something constructive to offer to our understanding of human sinfulness, he draws on the wisdom in "the twelve steps" of the Alcoholics Anonymous program (137).

6 *Sin as addiction*: This is described as the model of idolatry. "In sin we struggle to supplant God, aspiring, as the addict does, to an impossible perfection and driven by delusions of grandiosity" (161). "This idolatry is an action to that which is neither God nor life giving" (161). In an exemplary manner, McCormick explores four particular sins which thrive on this addictive energy: consumerism, neo-colonialism, militarism and sexism.

As a first step in responding to a crisis of models in understanding sin, McCormick is suggesting "that an excellent corrective and contribution might be made by shifting toward a model of addiction and recovery as a way of explaining sin and grace" (190).

While the identification and exploration of each of these models has merit in moral theology and in theological reflection, I was disappointed that the author did so little biblical work for each model, provided few practical examples and helps and devoted but one chapter—the final one—to "grace and hope". Perhaps the strength of this volume is in its delineation of the six specific and interrelated models—each of which offers important dimensions and dynamics for the "doing of theology".

Arnold D. Weigel  
Waterloo Lutheran Seminary

## **The Word In and Out of Season: Homilies for the Sundays of Ordinary Time, Cycle B**

Richard Viladesau

New York and Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1990.

\$7.95

The author is both a professional theologian (Immaculate Conception Seminary, Fordham University) and administrator of a parish in Long Island. In a succinct Introduction he sketches a way to hold together these two ministries of the Word. Accepting St. Augustine's goals for preaching (teach, please, persuade) and Tillich's method of correlating ultimate existential questions and God's self-revelation, he finds in Bernard Lonergan's transcendental method the means whereby the scriptural readings and the

human situations can so interact that affirmations about God become "conditions of possibility" in people. This enables "foundational" preaching, i.e., preaching which at basic levels connects faith and life for today's pluralistic and secularized hearers. It is, admittedly, not a new homiletic (it is essentially thematic) but his concern is to undergird and deepen homiletical practice theologically so that the "unnoticed presence of the transcendent dimension—at least as a question—[is exposed] in every aspect of human life" (16).

The homilies are on the lections for the 34 Sundays "in ordinary time" which, in Roman Catholic usage, means Sundays which do not fall within any of the great liturgical seasons. The scholar wins out over the pastor, however. It is rewarding to see contemporary biblical exegesis shared frankly (including Hebrew and Greek words and their nuances), to encounter an agile theological mind opening insights and making connections, and to observe a steady hand picking a theme (usually from the Gospel) and tracking it out with the help of First and Second Lessons without forcing or bending. Still, these homilies appeal finally to the mind, and human experience as well as doctrine are conceptualized. Preachers will find these homilies helpful as expositional and interpretative aids to the "ordinary time" lections, Cycle B.

Eduard R. Riegert  
Waterloo Lutheran Seminary

## **To Treat or Not To Treat? Bioethics and the Handicapped Newborn**

Richard C. Sparks

New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1988

Richard C. Sparks addresses a very difficult and yet contemporary dilemma for bioethics. The singular thrust of his text is focussed on the ethical question, "On what basis is it moral to forego or cease further treatment of a handicapped newborn?"

Even though the content of this book is purposely intended for a specific readership, the author does make a meaningful contribution to the study of bioethics. This resource will likely be of greatest benefit for those who grapple with the thorny ethical questions revolving around the treatment decisions of handicapped newborns: bioethicists, students of bioethics, and neonatal medical clinicians. It may also prove useful to hospital chaplains and pastors helping people make such decisions.

This text is not intended to be the definitive word on the subject, but is to be used "as an analytical tool, a helpful framework to foster civil discourse and clarifying argument among advocates of opposing ethical viewpoints. This goal the author accomplishes, making significant contribution