

The three parts of the book correspond to three questions: Who man is in himself, What makes him distinct from the rest, and What is his relationship with God. The parts are seamlessly interwoven and scholarly argued. The reader however may find himself in a maze of technical terms but this is certainly a fruit of high-level philosophical speculation of the author.

The question whether Edith Stein is a Thomist or not is something which the reader is invited to participate. Faithful to the philosophical methodology and distinct personality of Edith Stein, McNamara weaves his argument as to claim that Stein is NOT a Thomist but Thomistic, i.e. “since she is undoubtedly a Thomistically informed philosopher, even while not a ‘pure’ Thomist presenting a ‘pure’ Thomistic philosophy.” (p. 263) Whether readers approve of this claim or not, McNamara has certainly attracted the attention of careful thinkers wary of putting labels to philosophers.

Overall, this book is an essential contribution to the deepening of personalist philosophy and Thomistic studies in general and the growing literature in Steinian research in particular. It is not an easy task to synthesize two major philosophical traditions which Edith Stein did but it is equally difficult to locate a key to unlock the seemingly endless maze which comprises this synthesis. McNamara did an excellent service in providing the latter. With this, we thank him for this humble work, making St. Edith Stein a step closer to being proclaimed a Doctor of the Universal Church.

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**Delany, David H. *Viri Dignitatem: Personhood, Masculinity, and Fatherhood in the Thought of John Paul II*. USA: Emmaus Academic, 2023. pp. 386. ISBN: 978-1645853572.**

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In *Viri Dignitatem: Personhood, Masculinity, and Fatherhood in the Thought of John Paul II*, David H. Delaney offers a rigorous and insightful examination of John Paul II’s thoughts on masculinity and fatherhood. This book is a significant contribution to the field of John Paul II studies, providing a systematic and comprehensive analysis of these often overlooked aspects of his work. Delaney’s book notably stands as a robust counterpoint to the progressive ideologies that emphasize inclusivity, diversity, and equality in ways that can sometimes undermine the traditional understandings of sex, gender, and family rooted in natural law.

The book is meticulously divided into four parts, each addressing a fundamental aspect of John Paul II’s thought. The first part, “Human Personhood,” lays the groundwork by examining John Paul II’s understanding of the human person. Delaney’s analysis, grounded in Thomist metaphysics and phenomenological methods, presents a detailed and coherent view of personhood as inherently tied to one’s embodied existence as male or female. Delaney writes, “The foundation for Karol Wojtyła’s theology of fatherhood begins in Wojtyła’s early

philosophical work in ethics” (p. 3), indicating a deep dive into complex philosophical ideas. This foundational perspective is a direct challenge to contemporary efforts to blur the distinctions between sexes under the guise of inclusivity.

The second part, “Sex Difference and Masculinity,” explores the intricate nature of sex differences according to John Paul II. His exposition of the “spousal meaning of the body” is particularly insightful, demonstrating how John Paul II views the body as a revelation of the person’s capacity for self-gift and relationality. Delaney notes, the “female (Gen 1:27) is a positive revelation of complementary sex difference which interpenetrates all aspects of human life.” (p. 154). This section effectively bridges the philosophical and theological aspects of John Paul II’s thought, providing a coherent account of sex difference that emphasizes the complementarity of the sexes, countering the modern narrative that seeks to diminish or negate these differences in the name of equality.

The third part, “Fatherhood,” addresses a notable gap in the scholarship by focusing on John Paul II’s implicit theology of fatherhood. Delaney’s analysis is robust, particularly in his examination of the dual dimensions of natural and spiritual fatherhood, especially the role of the father as the protector of the wife and the family. He asserts, “John Paul II emphasizes that an important aspect of men’s vocational responsibilities as men and fathers is to collaborate with women in their task as women and mothers.” (p. 219). Delaney highlights the nurturing and authoritative roles of fathers, grounding his discussion in a rich theological and philosophical tradition. This treatment of fatherhood provides a necessary corrective to contemporary critiques that often portray traditional fatherhood roles as outdated or oppressive.

The final part, “Assessing John Paul II’s Theology of Masculinity and Fatherhood,” provides a critical evaluation of John Paul II’s views. Delaney addresses several critiques, including accusations of gender dualism, biologism, and the idealization of paternal roles. He defends Wojtyła saying, “John Paul II understands sex difference to have a foundational, constituting function for human personhood.” (p. 356). Delaney’s defense is thorough, demonstrating that John Paul II’s perspectives on masculinity and fatherhood are not only coherent but also deeply relevant in an age where progressive ideologies seek to dismantle these traditional constructs.

While Delaney’s work is characterized by its clarity and depth, several criticisms arise. The author’s heavy reliance on Thomistic and phenomenological frameworks can sometimes obscure the accessibility of the text to readers not well-versed in these philosophical traditions. However, this depth is precisely what is needed to counter superficial treatments of sex and gender in contemporary discourse. Additionally, Delaney’s staunch defense of John Paul II’s views might sometimes come across as dismissive of certain contemporary concerns. Yet, it is this very stance that provides a necessary antidote to the *relativism* that pervades modern discussions on gender and family.

One of the unique aspects of Delaney's book is its emphasis on the relational nature of personhood. Delaney claims, "The human person has a concreteness that can be adequately accounted for only in the category of relation. Relation provides the foundation for the person constituting character of masculinity and femininity, which are two ways of reciprocally modulating the person in two complementary modes of human nature." (p. 360). This perspective is valuable, yet it sometimes lacks a critical lens. Delaney could more rigorously examine the potential pitfalls of emphasizing relationality, such as reinforcing traditional gender roles or overlooking individual autonomy. Delaney's treatment of fatherhood is timely and compelling, offering a robust theological framework that transcends stereotypes and emphasizes moral and spiritual responsibilities. He states, "love as a personal act is that act which unites the person as metaphysically concrete to the person as relational and the person who reveals himself through act. It points to his fulfillment in relation to others through truth and love, and considering the sexual complementarity of personhood, points to the vocation of fatherhood." (p. 47). This traditional view is a strong counterpoint to progressive ideologies that seek to redefine or diminish the role of fatherhood as if it is an *adversary* to motherhood.

In conclusion, *Viri Dignitatem* is a significant and positive contribution to the study of John Paul II's thought. Delaney's meticulous scholarship and clear writing make this book an invaluable resource for students and scholars. While the analysis could benefit from engaging more critically with certain contemporary perspectives, Delaney successfully systematizes John Paul II's fragmented writings on masculinity and fatherhood. This book is highly recommended for those seeking to understand the depth and richness of John Paul II's vision of the human person, particularly in relation to masculinity and fatherhood. Delaney's work not only illuminates John Paul II's thought but also provides a framework for addressing contemporary issues related to sex difference, personhood, and family life, offering well-argued personalist arguments that may help in conversing with people who hold progressive ideologies that challenge these traditional concepts.

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Scientists have warned us for years about the climate emergency, which we now experience worsening effects.<sup>1</sup> A case in point is this year's new records of all-time high heat indexes made worldwide, causing grand-scale health risks. With the series of environmental changes drastically felt, Simone Thornton's book, *Eco-Rational Education: An Educational Response to Environmental Crisis*, offers a timely perspective on how to confront the

<sup>1</sup> William J. Ripple, et. al. "World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency 2022," *BioScience* 72, no. 12 (December 2022): 1149–1155, <https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biac083>.