

of interpretation in reading the Hebrew Bible text, especially the book of Amos. From the reviewer's side, the same approach can also be applied when reading other texts, both Old Testament and New Testament texts.

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**McNamara, Robert. *The Personalism of Edith Stein: A Synthesis of Thomism and Phenomenology*. Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2023. pp. 297. ISBN: 978-0-8132-3747-3. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55997/3010pslix180br3>**

The book is the printed form of the author's doctoral dissertation under Mette Lebeck and Marian Maskulak, two of the world's recognized experts on St. Edith Stein. The doctoral examiners are also top of the line Edith Stein scholars: Fr. Christof Betschart, OCD and Stephen Yates. Knowing these facts help prepare the reader that the book in hand is a heavyweight.

The language is clear and accessible to the readers but without sacrificing accuracy and scholarship. Those whose interests are high level Steinian study will not be disappointed. But the book is also for those who are seeking deeper insights into the thought of Edith Stein on the personhood beyond those which are already in print. The author displays his mastery of the thought of Stein and converses with the latest development in Steinian studies. His knowledge of the German language is a plus factor. The reader can also sense the excellent guidance of the author's mentor/s as he writes his doctoral thesis.

The footnotes show the author's erudition and scholarly output. The bibliography is arranged properly without tiring the readers. The methodology is clearly explained and the flow of each chapter is lucidly enunciated. We congratulate the CUA press for once again deciding to print a top-notch scholarly book.

A solid contribution to Steinian studies in the Anglophone world, CUA press continuously offers substantial publications in furthering the studies on Edith Stein that shows she is a high caliber philosopher worthy of being placed side by side with the great masters of Catholic thought. As a possible Doctor of the Universal Church, petitioned formally by the Discalced Carmelites Superior General Fr. Miguel Marquez Calle, OCD to Pope Francis last April 18, 2024, this work on Edith Stein's personalism can be considered a serious reason why Edith Stein should be given the title for the glory of God and service to the church.

How does the book further the cause of Edith Stein's ecclesiastical doctorate? In the context of the pandemic and the wars in some parts of the world, the Church needs someone who can be considered a *Doctor Humanitatis* even while she can also be called *Doctor Veritatis*. Stein experienced the horrors of the two world wars. During the first, she volunteered as a

nurse, against her mother's wishes, to attend to the sick and dying. During the second, she was murdered for her Catholic faith. She sought the essence of truth through dialogue as reflected in her philosophy of life. An empathetic thinker, Stein is described as a champion of the human person in the midst of conflicts and tensions. Behind the pages of the book, couched in technical language, lies the challenge of respect and protection of every human life. McNamara persuasively writes a book that proves that the personhood of all humans is something foundational in all our relationships, whether vertical or horizontal. The nature and mystery of personhood is something which Edith Stein pursued throughout her life. McNamara's work gives the topic further clarity as to merit it as a possible contribution and reason of Edith Stein's *eminens doctrina*, an important aspect when someone in the Catholic Church is being studied as a possible Doctor of the Universal Church.

The author is a seeker himself, not foreign to suffering and pain in the process of seeking the truth. The reader feels how the author sometimes grapples with concepts and nuances. Notwithstanding this fact, he presents his arguments lucidly and helps the reader to follow his premises.

On the area of phenomenology: the ticklish issue of constitution and consciousness is clearly articulated as something disclosive and receptive, not constructive and isolationist. This is in line with the thought of Edith Stein and further deepened in her encounter with Scholasticism and in particular Thomas Aquinas. Not all in the phenomenological tradition follow this way of thinking. This is also the area where Stein and Husserl's way separates even while the former maintains her respect and admiration for the latter throughout her life.

The author provides the readers future studies pertinent to Stein: the latter's relationship to Wojtyla and Scotus are singled out as possible areas to investigate. Some selected examples are: page 42, footnote 73; page 60, footnote 41; page 66, footnote 53; page 69, footnote 63. These suggestions give future researchers some guidelines and insights for future inquiries. In this sense, the author is assisting the formation of a future community of scholars on Stein and her relations to other philosophers. A comparative study on Wojtyla and Stein is a worthwhile project to do.

A major contribution of the author is the place of the Personal I in the way one understands the classical definition of person. The author's proposal runs thus: "The person is an individual substance of a rational nature borne by a conscious I." (p. 41) Following the Boethian definition, McNamara deepens it by highlighting the Steinian synthesis of phenomenology and scholasticism. It can be considered Edith Stein's contribution to the on-going discussion of the meaning and nature of person, especially when seen from the perspective of life-issues and debates on abortion and euthanasia as well as present day discussions on the nature of artificial intelligence. The personal I is also the anchor where the author locates Stein's distinctive synthesis of Thomism and Scholasticism.

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.**

**DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55997/3011pslix180br4>**

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