

is evident in his encyclicals: *Deus Caritas est*, *Spei Salvi*, *Lumen Fidei* (an encyclical greatly associated with him). Benedict XVI presented a view of what is beyond crises in the Church, also through the three-volume series on Jesus of Nazareth, that even in crisis we can encounter the Lord. Affairs of the world, Benedict XVI did not neglect. Through *Caritas in Veritate*, he remains in touch with the world. But he led the faithful to see beyond the human face and affairs of the Church; to encounter the Incarnate Word, Jesus of Nazareth.

More than simply a documentation and filing of human Church events and details of a recent pontificate, which is meant for the use of future historians, Regoli's work can be considered as a manual on how to write contemporary history, as it is an example of history-writing. In presenting the contemporary history of the Church (2005-2013), Regoli humanizes the Church, which at times is seen by many as too big and too divine as an institution. Although Regoli could have discussed further the theological directions and themes in the pontificate of Benedict XVI, through which he could have truly gone beyond the crises in the Church, though an institution run by men, is nevertheless founded, sustained, and en route to God. However, Regoli is a contemporary Church historian, more than a theologian.

Hilario Sicat, Jr., OP

Cole, Basil, OP. *Angelic Virtues and Demonic Vices: Aquinas's Practical Principles for Reaching Heaven and Avoiding Hell*. Gastonia: TAN Books, 2023. pp. 288. ISBN: 978-1-5051-2921-2.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55997/1010pslxi184br3>

Christian morality entails nourishing a set of habitual practices that either lead to one's sanctification or condemnation. Using Thomistic principles to give a cohesive and rational account of ethics, Fr. Basil Cole, OP, explains that both virtues and vices have their own interconnected coalition that affects and informs human actions.

Fr. Cole gives a practical guide on the understanding of virtues and vices by likening them to a military chain of command wherein higher forces influence and direct the lower ones. Unlike other works written by the author on morality that are more academic in style, the current material is quite straightforward, easily digestible to audiences that may not be familiar with Aquinas's works.

Before delving into the virtues and vices themselves, Fr. Cole begins with Aquinas's view that the goal of every person is to be happy. Due to the frailty of human nature in the present life, man needs the aid of virtues to sustain him in his pursuit of ultimate happiness which can only be ultimately attained in God.

The regimental presentation of the vices begins with their queen: Pride is described as a disordered love for one's excellence and the refusal to be subjected and dependent on God. Lust is considered a sin against self-mastery while the demonic vice of vainglory makes one excessively look for attention, affirmation, and fame, leading to envy.

Next, Fr. Cole tackles the problem of greed or avarice which Aquinas identifies as the root of vices such as treachery, fraud, and deceit. Envy effects a certain sadness towards other people's good fortune, fueling the vices of greed and lust. Vicious anger is closely linked with pride, envy, greed, and lust, making the person react disproportionately to situations. Gluttony is a vice not because of the quantity of the food intake, but because of the desire to ingest food for pleasure's sake. Finally, acedia or sorrow is described as a form of spiritual boredom wherein a person loses his taste for spiritual goods and practices like prayer and contemplation.

On the camp of the angelic virtues, Fr. Cole begins with the virtue of penance as "the bulwark against all vices." Humility and magnanimity are the virtues that fight against the vices of pride, vainglory, and envy while the problem of avarice is countered by the virtues of justice, solidarity, and generosity, directing one's efforts toward the good of others and of society at large. Moreover, gentleness or meekness mitigates anger so that it will not reach disproportionate levels while the virtue of friendship also contributes to the regulation of anger by promoting agreeableness with other people.

The author describes the virtues contra gluttony as "pro-life" virtues because they respect the natural laws of the body by ensuring the right amount of nourishment. In the virtues of chastity and self-control, Fr. Cole explains that sexual pleasure in the context of married life is not necessarily sinful because the marriage vows provide the rational mean that would regulate and order the pleasure derived from the act.

Fr. Cole reiterates in the penultimate chapter that acts of penance (prayer, fasting, and almsgiving) cure the sin of acedia in the soul. This allows the person to remain open to the outpouring of divine grace which roots out the residues of past sins. Lastly, Fr. Cole caps his book by highlighting the virtue of prayer in one's spiritual life. Engaging in contemplation, meditations, mortification, singing of hymns, and other popular devotions strengthens the person's relationship with God, thus opening a space for spiritual delight that impels him to strive for sanctification.

Though taking his citations from a handful of sources (mainly from the Catechism, Aquinas's *Summa*, and other Church documents), Fr. Cole was able to demonstrate his mastery and familiarity with the dynamics of Christian spiritual life. His work demonstrates that striving for virtue involves cooperation with the inner workings of God's grace without which no good pursuit is possible.

A good feature of the book is that it gives concrete examples in each chapter on how the specific virtue or vice unfolds in the lives of men and women, whether religious, clerics, or lay people. Fr. Cole shows that the principles of Christian morality are both practical and practicable because they are founded on the natural desire of man to reach for beatitude.

Following Aquinas's position that "the virtues are all connected with one another, not materially, but formally," Fr. Cole asserts that combating the camp of vices involves the joint forces of the virtues confirmed by God's grace. He intentionally did not present the usual schema of pitting one vice against its contrary virtue since he wanted to show

that, in practice, the former cannot really be eradicated by a single habit alone. One needs to tap the other angelic virtues to ward off the demonic vices, always trusting in God's heavenly aid to sustain one's spiritual journey while on earth.

Angelic Virtues and Demonic Vices gives a glimpse of the inner battle transpiring within the hearts of every individual striving to find happiness and holiness. With this book, Fr. Cole exemplifies the understanding that Christian morality is not so much what man does for God, but what God does in man who freely cooperates with his grace.

Eugene Dominic V. Aboy, OP

Alaurin, Edgardo D. O.P. *Sports in the Philippines: History, Values, Spirituality*. Manila: The University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2021. pp. 244. ISBN 987-971-506-877-2.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55997/1011pslxi184br4>

Sports occupies an intriguing niche within the Philippine society. The conventional wisdom of the Filipinos about sports is that it emphasizes competitive activities that could be for leisure or recreation, or even a professional occupation. Thus, the ramification of such viewpoint was that it permeates a myopic and trivial view of sports instead of using it as a lens to probe the Philippine society in a myriad of ways. Ergo, Fr. Alaurin's *Sports in the Philippines: History, Values, Spirituality* is deemed as a trailblazing effort as it attempts to drive the field of sports and sporting culture out of intellectual backwater in the Philippine setting.

The strength of the book lies on two aspects: First, the author has used simple, precise, and straightforward wordings. Devoid of any verbose or complex terminologies that could hamper the transfer of ideas between the author and the reader, the book is now easily comprehended for both general populace and the people in the scholarly fields. The presence of terms borrowed from foreign languages (be it in Latin, Spanish, or any other language of etymological origin) is deemed as an unavoidable feat but it must not be treated as an obstacle for there is a provided English translation of such terminologies to guide the reader.

Second and more importantly, the discussion of the three distinct aspects specified in the sub-title namely: History, Values, and Spirituality was organized in a manner that the reader could not get a feeling of confusion. The author devoted the first three chapters of the book in the discussion of 'history,' wherein he conspicuously utilized a worldview approach that positioned the development of Philippine sports as a byproduct of the historical and ongoing development of numerous sports and its subsequent propagation hailing from both the Western and Eastern world. The foray of 'sports' in the Philippines came during the Spanish colonial period, not during the pre-colonial period nor the American colonial period, with the introduction of games and activities that are uniquely Spanish in origin, such as but not limited to *jai-alai*, *corrida* (pp. 38-39), *karéra* (p. 40-41), *esgrima* (p. 42), and games played at *férias* (p. 41). However, Fr. Alaurin should clarify as to the differentiation of the operational meaning of the terms, *sport* and *games*, during this period, and how he would historicize such activities, as it might