

in making Levinas's complex ideas accessible without sacrificing their depth and in demonstrating these ideas' their relevance to psychological practice. More importantly, it invites psychologists to reconsider the ethical foundations of the discipline and to engage more deeply with the human person as an irreducible Other. Faithful to the non-normative ethics of Levinas, which does not provide definitive answers or ready-made solutions, it offers something arguably more valuable: a framework for rethinking what it means to practice psychology in an ethically grounded, relationally attuned, and responsive way to the complexities of human existence.

For readers who will engage with its philosophical demands, Laubscher's book stands as a work that challenges, inspires, and opens new possibilities for a more humane and reflective practice of psychology.

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**Reimers, Adrian. *The Ethos of the Christian Heart: Reading Veritatis Splendor*. South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2025. pp 250. ISBN-13: 978-1587312427. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55997//2011pslxi185br5>**

Dr Adrian Reimers is known for his extensive research into Karol Wojtyła's personalism and ethics. In his latest publication, *The Ethos of the Christian Heart: Reading Veritatis Splendor*, he analyses both the encyclical itself and the way Wojtyła's moral vision is recovered through it. In addition, he attempts to show that *Veritatis Splendor* is not only a response to dissent in the history of moral theology but a constructive account of the Christian moral life as a response to divine love.

Reimers contextualises his research within the contemporary tension in Catholic moral theology between fidelity to tradition and the desire for reform and renewal in light of the signs of the times. In particular, he discusses the concept of dissent, especially in the wake of *Humanae Vitae* and *Amoris Laetitia*. For Reimers, dissent is not just a sociological or ecclesial issue but a reflection of a deeper philosophical problem: the eclipse of transcendence and the fragmentation of the notion of the good within post-Enlightenment thought.

The work is unique in that it systematically reads *Veritatis Splendor* as a constructive, rather than a reactionary, moral vision grounded in the primacy of love. Thus, the encyclical is not juridical but relational. Morality is a response to divine love and not just mere conformity to law (p. 14, 31). Under this interpretation, the encyclical can be placed within the broader tradition of Christian ethics, drawing on both classical accounts of the good, such as those of Thomas Aquinas and Saint Augustine, and contemporary articulations by modern thinkers such as Kant and Scheler.

One of the strongest and most insightful aspects of Reimers' analysis is his examination of modern thought. He presents figures such as David Hume, Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, and Max Scheler not as intellectual adversaries but as interlocutors whose positions illuminate the stakes of Wojtyła's project (p. 11). This is seen in his analysis of the vanishing good. Modernism gradually did away with the concept of teleology within modern science and ethics. In doing so, the moral discourse has been destabilised with the good being understood as preference, utility, or personal satisfaction. Morality thus

becomes detached from teleology and ultimately from truth itself. Therefore, John Paul II's distinction between *having* and *being* is essential to show that morality cannot simply be reduced to a set of behavioral rules. Moral actions are about what becomes in relation to God and our neighbor, not just what we have and/or experiences (p. 78). *Ergo*, Wojtyła's synthesis serves both as a retrieval of the concept of the good and as an alternative account of morality, restoring the unity of truth, freedom, and moral law.

Crucially, throughout the work, Reimers shows the connection between *Veritatis Splendor* and *Person and Act*. In the latter, Wojtyła emphasized the role of a human person's action and subjectivity in discussions on morality. Moral evaluation cannot be limited to external behavior or consequences, for it must take into account human dynamism, where consciousness, freedom, and truth converge. Conscience is neither a pure feeling of conviction nor the ultimate arbiter and must be formed in truth lest it deceive the individual. These examples show that morality resists both deterministic and subjectivist reduction. It also resists proportionalism and consequentialism through the concepts of natural law and intrinsic morality of human action. In all this, one can see the continuity of the pope's thought and that the encyclical rests on these key principles.

It is this continuity that shows the uniqueness of Reimers' work. As he says, "*Person and Act* might be read as a preliminary philosophical groundwork for *Veritatis Splendor*." (p. 192) In doing so, he refutes the idea that *Veritatis Splendor* is all about prohibitions, conscience, or disputed moral theories. Alongside these, it showcases the drama of the human person before the good.

A potential criticism of the book is that, while its treatment of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment ideas is broad, their differences may not receive adequate attention. For example, Hume, Kant, Mill, and Scheler do not all belong to the same intellectual tradition, and modern philosophers may wish for a more differentiated account of each philosopher's project than the book provides. However, this is consistent with the book's purpose: Reimers is not attempting to create a history of modern ethics. Rather, he is attempting to make clear the philosophical backdrop from which Wojtyła and *Veritatis Splendor* can be understood.

This is a very minor quibble with an otherwise substantial work. Ultimately, Reimers shows that *Veritatis Splendor* is much more than a mere reassertion of traditional Catholic moral doctrine. It is, at its core, a systematic theocentric and personalist account (pp. 38-39) of the human person's nature and vocation to communion with God. By situating the encyclical within a broader context, Reimers shows its continued relevance to the moral and anthropological crises contemporary culture faces. Readers will appreciate the book's systematic discussion, philosophical depth, fidelity to the sources, and use of vivid imagery to illustrate its concepts. It is a valuable resource for scholars engaged in the ongoing task of articulating a coherent and compelling account of the moral life. True to the spirit of the encyclical, it ultimately directs the reader beyond theoretical disputes toward the more fundamental question of the good and, by implication, toward the pursuit of truth itself.

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