



Reading Patristic Texts on Social Ethics: Issues and Challenges for Twenty-First-Century Christian Social Thought (CUA Studies in Early Christianity)

John Leemans

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Can writings of the church fathers related to the field of social ethics be of value to contemporary discussions on the topic? In addressing this question, the authors of this book discuss the exciting challenges that scholars of both early Christianity and contemporary Catholic social thought face regarding the interaction of historical sources and present issues.

Essays explore concerns related to hermeneutics, audiences, and political and social contexts. Some of the essays take interest in particular social issues, including usury, property, justice, and common good. Others evaluate the nature of the disciplines of early Christian studies and social ethics and why those disciplines may have difficulty carrying on a dialogue.

Overall, the essays reflect on the potential difficulty of contextualizing early Christian documents that purport to address socio-ethical themes both within their own time and place and within the research interests of Christian social ethicists. Where one author may see this problem as insurmountable, another argues that early Christian texts were written with multiple audiences in mind, especially future audiences such as readers today. Several of the authors discuss the relevance of social ideas of the Fathers and how they resonate with modern readers.

Johan Leemans is professor of Christianity in late antiquity at the Catholic University of Leuven and co-author of *"Let Us Die That We May Live": Greek Homilies on Christian Martyrs*. Brian Matz, assistant professor of historical theology at Carroll College, is author of *Patristic Sources and Catholic Social Teaching*. Johan Verstraeten is professor of ethics at the Catholic University of Leuven and editor of *Scrutinizing the Signs of the Times in the Light of the Gospel*.

Contributors: Pauline Allen, Reimund Bieringer, Susan Holman, Thomas Hughson, Brenda Ihssen, Johan Leemans, Brian Matz, Wendy Mayer, Helen Rhee, Richard Schenk, Peter van Nuffelen, and Johan Verstraeten

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

"A small handbook of patristic hermeneutics which should be compulsory reading for anybody attempting to read ancient homilies with a theological and ethical interest"

-*Vigiliae Christianae*

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