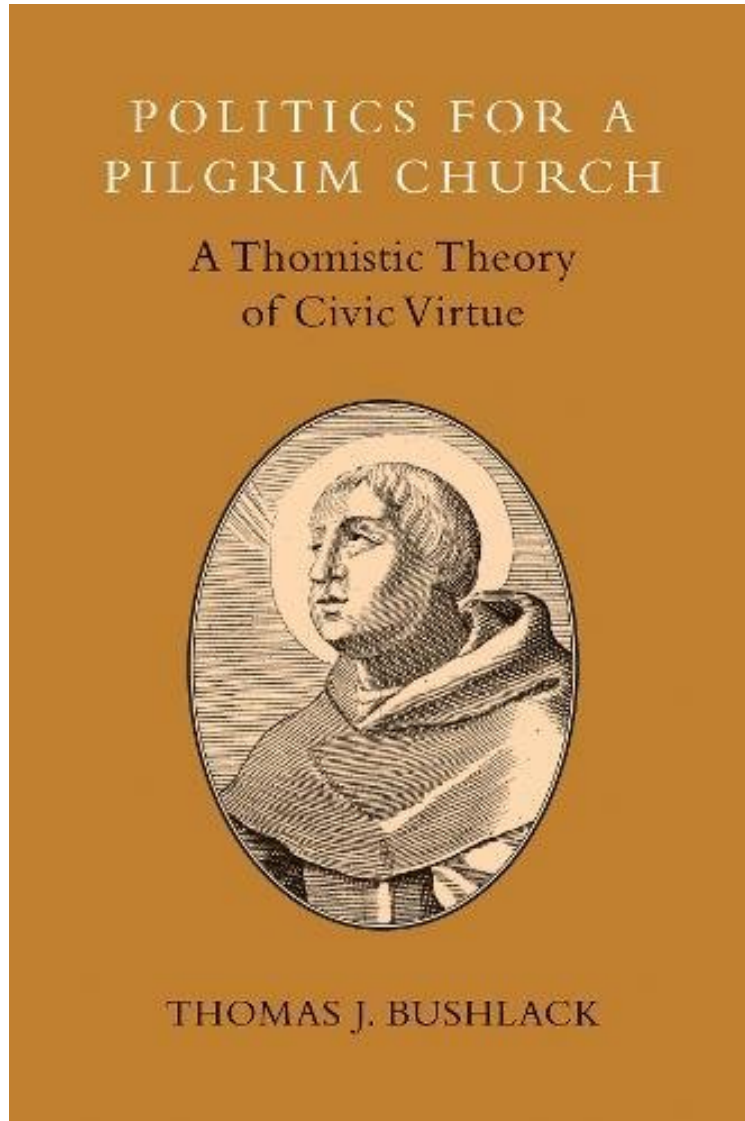


[Free and download] Politics for a Pilgrim Church: A Thomistic Theory of Civic Virtue

Politics for a Pilgrim Church: A Thomistic Theory of Civic Virtue

Thomas J. Bushlack

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helpful. *Pilgrim and Political People* By Steve Millies Bushlack has delivered a fresh and thoughtful perspective on Aquinas's enduring contribution to our theological and political understanding. Too often, the temptation with St. Thomas either is to embrace him or to dismiss him because his work was so exhaustively systematic. It seems people either are drawn to a perception of rigidity, all questions having been answered forever, or repelled by it. Yet what is best in Aquinas and in the church's tradition is not really rigid or fixed at all. It is flexible, adaptable, eternal, and so we neither should embrace it nor dismiss it very easily. Aquinas always challenges us in the fresh light of changing circumstances. Bushlack finds his method in this exacting (and, true) proposition, and takes up the metaphor of pilgrimage to consider the common good in the light of a fragmented world and a secular political culture. There are no easy answers, and Bushlack has not offered any. To navigate in the social and political world as Catholics among non-Catholics can be uncomfortable. We ought not to be tempted by the allure of easy answers, either to give up or to circle the wagons to build a ghetto of certainty. The strength of this book lies in its bold and honest effort to link the eternal to the temporal, the ancient tradition of the church to our present lives. Pilgrims walk a long and hard road, the effort taxes us--and, it should if the journey has value. But the road began someplace, and it leads someplace when we walk it.

Presents an innovative, constructive alternative to Christian involvement in the "culture wars" Church leaders and scholars have long wrestled with what should provide a guiding vision for Christian engagement in culture and politics. In this book Thomas Bushlack argues that a retrieval of Thomas Aquinas's understanding of civic virtue provides important resources for guiding this engagement today. Bushlack suggests that Aquinas's vision of the pilgrim church provides a fitting model for seeking the earthly common good of the political community, and he notes the features of a Thomistic account of justice and civic virtue that remain particularly salient for the twenty-first century. The book concludes with suggestions for cultivating a Christian rhetoric of the common good as an alternative to the predominant forms of discourse fostered within the culture wars that have been so divisive.

Catholic Books "Exceptionally well-written and clear in its explanations. Anyone frustrated with the seemingly interminable political gridlock and culture war rhetoric of our time may find some direction here for finding a better way." *The of Politics* "Moves fluidly over important intellectual terrain. . . . A fine example of contemporary Thomist political thought and a glimpse into the internal dialogue of the Catholic Church as it calibrates its ancient traditions with modern politics." Jean Porter University of Notre Dame "Thomas Bushlack's account of the civic virtues provides a much-needed bridge between classical Thomism and the moral challenges and values of democracy and civic engagement. . . . This book is an important contribution to Thomistic ethics, but it also offers a great deal to anyone who cares about justice, the public sphere, or the social witness of the church." William Cavanaugh DePaul University "A serious attempt to help a church with one foot in this world and one foot in the next to achieve balance. . . . Bushlack connects his work on Aquinas with a sensitive and holistic reading of Vatican II's ecclesiology and thereby points a way beyond a church consumed by culture wars. This book is a significant contribution to Catholic political thought, but its generous spirit will appeal to anyone interested in common goods." Eric Gregory Princeton University "Various retrievals of Aquinas have been a hallmark of modern Catholic thought, especially in discussions of natural law, virtue, and the common good. But the relation of these many Thomisms to resurgent ecumenical interest in political theology has been largely implicit. With clarity and charity, Bushlack's elegant book corrects this surprising neglect by advancing a Thomistic account of civic virtue within democratic polities. *Politics for a Pilgrim Church* is a needed book for today." Stephen J. Pope Boston College "This lively and compelling development of Vatican II's image of the pilgrim church couldn't come at a better time. Bushlack's ecclesially centered virtue ethics moves beyond stale polarities by creatively integrating an ethic of witness with an ethic of political responsibility. A must-read for anyone interested in contemporary Christian social ethics."