



Richard M. Gula, *The Way of Goodness and Holiness: A Spirituality for Pastoral Ministers* (Collegetown, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011), 170 pp.

Richard M. Gula, SS, PhD, Professor of Moral Theology at the Franciscan School of Theology, has dedicated his life to the education and formation of pastoral ministers. As a moral theologian, he bridges the world of academia in moral theology, medical and professional ethics, to hands-on ministry. Thus, his writing spans academic works, such as *Reason Informed by Faith*, to ethical decision making, such as *Moral Discernment: Moral Discernment Guide*, to spirituality books, such as *The Way of Goodness and Holiness: A Spirituality for Pastoral Ministers*, which is the focus of this review. The book offers two contributions to the field of spirituality for ministry.

First, the reader is alerted by the first sentence of Gula's introduction to the *reflective, practical nature* of this work. The reader is asked "before you begin reading this book" to do a "spiritual" exercise, by imagining one is at a dinner party for your retirement and colleagues begin to describe you. You are asked to write down three "virtues" that "you aspire to embody in ministry." The exercise invites the reader to set one's sight both on what one wants or hope to be (one's *goodness*), and on what fulfillment (or *holiness*) in pastoral ministry looks like. Throughout the book and the end of each chapter, Gula invites the reader to flesh out the insights gained by offering practical suggestions and disciplines that one can embrace in order to embody the character strengths (virtues) required for ministry.

Secondly, this book takes a *virtue* perspective to cultivating spirituality. The human journey, as a spiritual journey, is relational; being human is about being in relationship with others. As a spiritual journey, it has four goals: being human, imitating Christ, practicing the faith and developing virtues. This last goal, developing virtues, is the primary focus of this book. Gula directs the reader away from viewing morality as a matter of actions and consequences (What shall I do?) to the concept of virtue (Who am I, who do I want to become?) as rooted in the ancient Greek and other ethical traditions. The focus is on the *goodness* of the actor, instead of the good works done. As a spiritual journey it is about *holiness*.

Gula then examines the four areas of ministerial formation (human, intellectual, spiritual, pastoral) that are common to Catholic ministry formation

by identifying the virtues that are to be cultivated in each of those areas. For instance, human formation requires the virtues of gratitude, humility, fidelity, and self-care. Pastoral formation needs justice, compassion, courage, and generosity. He ends by identifying community, friendship, mentors and models, and spiritual practices as the aids needed to strengthen these character traits and style of life.

Given that the theme of Volume 32 of *Reflective Practice* is devoted to virtues in formation and supervision, Gula offers a list of virtues worth examining, along with sets of spiritual practices that can foster and sustain those virtues. While Gula's work is based in Christian theology and set in a Catholic context, the virtues examined here transcend any particular religious tradition.

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Barbara Blodgett, *Becoming the Pastor You Hope to Be: Four Practices for Improving Ministry* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2011), 181 pp.

Barbara Blodgett notes in her introduction, "Our gifts are not ultimately our own to take credit for. But we can take credit—and responsibility—for what we do with them." This sets the tone for her book, *Becoming the Pastor You Hope to Be*, full of sage counsel informed by her own experience, powerful theories, and theological reflection. Blodgett, who formerly served as director of Supervised Ministries at Yale Divinity School and now as Minister for Vocation and Formation for the United Church of Christ, is well-equipped to advocate for practices intended to encourage excellence in ministry while deepening the relational resources that nourish the minister.

In five chapters Blodgett addresses four practices: soliciting feedback (instead of praise), seeking transformative mentoring, participation in a professionally and personally enriching peer group, and purposeful growth in public leadership.

Blodgett draws on her experience as a field educator and on the research of social psychologist, Carol Dweck, to assert that 'smart is as smart