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Book review: Women, Conscience, and the Creative Process (Madeleva Lecture in Spirituality 2009) by Anne E. Patrick, S.N.J.M

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WOMEN, CONSCIENCE, AND THE CREATIVE PROCESS. By Anne E. Patrick, S.N.J.M. Madeleva Lecture in Spirituality (2009). Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2011. Pp. viii + 83. \$9.95.

In keeping with the tradition of the Madeleva Lecture, Patrick explores a theme that illustrates the breadth of that lecture's celebration of the contributions of women theologians by examining the notion of creativity itself. Teasing apart insights from Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and Don Fabun, P. lists eight steps in the creative process, allowing her to present creativity in a relationally nuanced manner.

P. uses the genesis of the School of Sacred Theology (founded in 1944) at St. Mary's College, host of the Madeleva lecture series, to illustrate the social and multidimensional nature of creativity. No graduate education for women in theology existed in the United States at that time, but, as P. notes, the idea of offering such a program was not the result of a thunderbolt visited upon Sr. Madeleva Wolff, C.S.C., then president, but rather the fruit of a productively creative mind, open to intuition, and aware of the need to offer advanced work in theology to women. With insight, P. also observes that Mary Daly, one of the program's early graduates, also undertook to join a serious moral critique to a highly creative vision.

P. calls for "creative responsibility" that will entail not only imagination but also "prudence, discernment and caring" (67). This frame for conscience has numerous, often overlooked, footholds in the Christian tradition. Taken together with P.'s invitation to see creativity as a process rather than an out-of-context moment, this work's treatment of conscience as a world-affirming engagement is an insight that is particularly timely in an era of bumper-sticker moral theology.

The text of this thoughtful brief volume would stand alone for an adult discussion group or advanced undergraduate class; with its notes it could provide numerous starting points for a graduate course.

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THE BEST LOVE OF THE CHILD: BEING LOVED AND BEING TAUGHT TO LOVE AS THE FIRST HUMAN RIGHT. Edited by Timothy P. Jackson. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011. Pp. xxv + 386. \$28.

The volume examines the "best love of the child" in contexts ranging from childrearing to legal standards for custody. Elaborating the dual meaning of this "best love"—both the love *for* the child and the love *expected from* the child—is among the book's key contributions and is a welcome shift from normative models focused on a child's negative rights. The 13 essays of this collection are grouped into four parts by discipline.

The social-psychological perspectives are straightforward. Peter Benson and Eugene Roehlkepartain argue for a positive focus on "optimal development." Annette Mahoney and Kenneth Pargament suggest how to foster a child's love of the sacred. Robyn Fivush shows how a child's well-being is influenced by the elaborated reminiscing of parents.

The historical section is the weakest, needing more integration with the volume's theme. However, John Witte and Heather Johnson helpfully examine the duties of the child from the household manual tradition.

The final two sections—philosophical/theological and legal—are the most substantive of the collection and succeed in advancing its overall project. Cynthia Willett argues for a relational ontology to ground collective responsibility. Richard Osmer considers sin to show that love of the child requires "authoritative parents" who both hold accountable and forgive. Marcia Bunge defends the social agency of children, highlighting their vocation, which includes play and even disobedience.

In the legal section, Michael Broyde engages the Jewish tradition to recommend categories of respect and care rather than love. Rana Lehr-Lehnardt and Jeremy Gunn argue that the "best interest" legal standard ought to include love as a factor. Margaret Brinig and Steven Nocka suggest how public policy should promote unconditional love in children through "recognized, legal, stable relationships." Don Browning

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