

*Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation*. Ed. William C. Placher. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2005. 452 pp.

I can say without hesitation that William Placher's *Callings: Twenty Centuries of Christian Wisdom on Vocation* is one of the best treatments of the subject of vocation from a solid and balanced theological perspective. Placher, Professor of Humanities at Wabash College, has done an outstanding job in compiling a theological reader of representative historical selections on the understanding of vocation in the first two millennia of Christianity.

A thread found in both Placher's introductions, and in his selection of the readings, is the wide variety and experience of Christian vocation. Given this diversity, whether one is called to be a martyr, a monk, a preacher, a parent or potter, *all* can claim a part of Christianity's understandings of vocation. Placher does an excellent job in introducing his reader to the saints of old and what these men and women of faith were thinking when they considered their personal calling.

What makes *Callings* so refreshing is that instead of just reading footnotes and very brief excerpts of past and current Christian thinkers, Placher gives his reader over fifty sizable selections of original source material. There is no substitute to reading the passion in these various writers first-hand. Placher has made his book accessible for those wanting an introduction to great historical resources on the concept of vocation.

The combination of original source material and Placher's introductions make *Callings* a very significant bridge in the current conversation on vocation. This book could be used in both the classroom setting and the pastoral study as a valuable resource.

~ George M. Hillman