



Law's Virtues: Fostering Autonomy and Solidarity in American Society (Moral Traditions)

Cathleen Kaveny

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Can the law promote moral values even in pluralistic societies such as the United States? Drawing upon important federal legislation such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, legal scholar and moral theologian Cathleen Kaveny argues that it can. In conversation with thinkers as diverse as Thomas Aquinas, Pope John Paul II, and Joseph Raz, she argues that the law rightly promotes the values of autonomy and solidarity. At the same time, she cautions that wise lawmakers will not enact mandates that are too far out of step with the lived moral values of the actual community.

According to Kaveny, the law is best understood as a moral teacher encouraging people to act virtuously, rather than a police officer requiring them to do so. In *Law's Virtues* Kaveny expertly applies this theoretical framework to the controversial moral-legal issues of abortion, genetics, and euthanasia. In addition, she proposes a moral analysis of the act of voting, in dialogue with the election guides issued by the US bishops. Moving beyond the culture wars, this bold and provocative volume proposes a vision of the relationship of law and morality that is realistic without being relativistic and optimistic without being utopian.

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