

## Foreword

Bob Meagher and I were colleagues in the Department of Theology at the University of Notre Dame for a number of years beginning in 1970. I quite frankly did not know what to make of Meagher. He had been a Notre Dame undergraduate who, like many at that time, had been deeply influenced by Father John Dunne, CSC. Father Dunne, who recently died, was a legend on the campus of Notre Dame. Students poured into his courses because he was a person of great insight drawing on the literatures of the world to illumine what it means to be a human being. Meagher followed in Dunne's path, developing a way to think about our lives in a manner that challenged the disciplinary boundaries that make up the modern university. At the time I was a much more conventional thinker—thus my problem of not knowing what to make of Meagher.

Meagher left Notre Dame to teach at Hampshire College. That school seemed to be a perfect fit for Meagher because Hampshire was a school built on the presumption that if undergraduates were to get the education they needed to face the realities of our time the disciplinary divisions must be challenged. Because of his move to Hampshire, however, Meagher and I simply lost touch with one another—at least we lost touch until Meagher sent me this extraordinary book. I had no idea that he had spent so much time and scholarly attention on thinking through the moral challenges war entails.

So it is a great pleasure and honor that he has asked me to write the Foreword to his book. To be asked to write the Foreword not only reconnects us after years of not being in touch, but it also suggests over those same years we have come to share judgments I suspect we would not have anticipated when we were colleagues at Notre Dame. I do not mean to suggest we agree about the morality or, if you prefer, the immorality of war, but I think the reader of this book who knows something of my account of war will find some deep continuities between Meagher and me.

In truth, Meagher's work on war continues to represent the kind of difference I suggested above characterized our intellectual differences when we were colleagues at Notre Dame. Meagher continues to have a scholarly control of literatures I simply cannot pretend to know well. Thus one of the characteristics of this book is his ability to characterize the way war is depicted in the literatures of Greece to inform our current understanding of war. I can only admire his ability to utilize literatures that are normally not part of the discussions about the morality of war.

Those literatures, moreover, are quite important for the development of one of his major themes in this book. Without in any way trying to undercut the use of just war as a way to evaluate the morality of war, Meagher has directed our attention to what war does to combatants in order to help us better understand why war is such a problematic enterprise. Meagher takes no prisoners, but that does not mean his account of what

participation in war does to soldiers is not extremely important. Drawing on literatures of many cultures, Meagher helps us see how the very imaginative possibility that I may have to kill someone constitutes a challenge to our everyday morality that is not easily integrated into an ongoing way of life.

I need to make sure there is no misunderstanding about what I have just written. I do not mean to suggest to the reader that Meagher has failed to provide an account of the development of just war theory. The exact opposite is the case as he has given us a tour of the development of just war theory that will be of great use for those who find just war reflection crucial for any attempt to better understand the morality of warfare. His account of the relation of the church's development of an ethics of sex and just war alone is worth the price of the book. His account of the role of Ambrose in the development of just war reflection is a genuine contribution to our knowledge that, as far as I know, no one has developed with the depth he has.

I am convinced his emphasis on what war does to combatants is a decisive intervention that helps us better understand the morality of war. As a person committed to Christian nonviolence, I fear that many assume a commitment to nonviolence carries with it a negative judgment against those who participate in war. Meagher challenges that presumption by helping us see that those who dissent from war and those who have participated in war share more in common than the stereotype of either would suggest. That war wounds us morally is not only true of those who prosecute the violence of war; it is true of all whom war touches.

Toward the end of this book Meagher quotes Camus to the effect that the years they have gone through, referring to the years of interwar Europe, "have killed something in us." Drawing on a wide range of literature Meagher helps us, warrior and pacifist alike, to discover what war has done to us. He concludes his book with the strong claim that just war theory has been a cover for the support of war without in any decisive way limiting the violence of war. That is a challenge that hopefully those committed to just war will take seriously.

I began by locating my early relationship to Meagher, noting at the time I was not quite sure what to make of him as a person or a thinker. I am not sure our reconnecting after so many years means I now have a better grasp of the character of his intelligence. But I do know one thing: he possesses a courage that enables him to challenge the myths that surround war with a bracing honesty that is as powerful as it is unusual. I sincerely hope this book will find a wide readership.

**Stanley Hauerwas**

Gilbert T. Rowe Professor Emeritus of Divinity and Law  
Duke Divinity School