

list? For example, would he add to the vocation of childbearing or civic engagement some concerns about planetary health and climate justice? And finally, how might Loy's warranted admonishment of gladness typologies better take sadness to heart without bypassing Good Friday lament for Easter morning hallelujahs? That is, in times such as these how might we understand vocation as both a duty to endure and also a hopeful gift to claim and someday to relish?

4. *Reply by David W. Loy, Concordia University, Irvine CA*

I wish to thank Robert Benne, Suzanne Hequet, and Kiara Jorgenson for their thoughtful comments. Three themes emerge in their responses: joy in vocation, the dynamic character of God's call, and the scope of our relationships.

Benne and Jorgenson worry that I understate the importance of joy and meaning in vocation. I suspect our disagreement is superficial. Family, neighbors, coworkers, and so forth are gifts from God; we ought to rejoice in them. God calls us to serve them; we ought to find satisfaction in doing so. For one whose affections are properly ordered, this task is a gift—the opportunity to serve another under God's care. However, for us who are still sinful, it is not always so. Turned in on ourselves, we sometimes love ourselves more than our neighbors, and we see God's gift as a joyless, meaningless task. My argument is therefore simply that we should not define vocation in terms of joy or satisfaction—at least not for us fallen creatures. However, that does not mean we should not seek meaningful occupations or joy-producing relationships. Indeed, the scripture repeatedly calls us to rejoice: in the Lord, in our spouses (“the wife of one's youth”), in God's gift of prosperity, in work—and even in our sufferings.

Regarding the dynamic character of vocation, I can only say, “Amen!” Hequet beautifully illustrates how God opens up new opportunities for us to love others in the midst of changing—and difficult—circumstances. We do not choose all our relationships, but neither are they static. The people in our lives develop new needs, new people enter our lives, we discover new ways to serve our neighbors, and sometimes God calls us in new directions. The *status quo* changes, and how we live in our various vocations changes

with it. Marriages mature, friendships ebb and flow, our work (paid or unpaid) takes unexpected directions as we pursue new interests and talents. Peasants need not remain peasants. New people, new needs, new talents open new avenues for serving our neighbors in God's various callings.

Jorgenson observes that my account "focuses upon human labor and social relatedness." She contends that excluding creation from the scope of vocation reinforces relationships of domination. I am not persuaded. On my reading of Luther, vocation is God's call to care for those whom he places before us, to enrich their lives rather than extract value from them. Domination is therefore rebellion against God's call. For that reason, the admitted anthropocentrism of my account does not justify exploitation of people or creation. Instead, it casts us as children of our heavenly Father, whose selfless love extends to all in Christ and whose providential care sustains the entire creation. In Christ Jesus, we find forgiveness for our own failure to rejoice in his gifts, we seek opportunities to bring joy to others, and we look forward to the day when he will end the self-serving domination of sinful human beings by handing the kingdom over to our loving heavenly Father.