In his final chapter, Brugger inverts the argument which sees suicide as self-murder, and argues that if, as Aquinas says, suicide is contrary to the charity we owe ourselves, killing other people must be contrary to the charity we owe them. He does not see the relevance of the premise that everything naturally resists what destroys it, so that to kill oneself is contrary to natural inclination. But an act is specified by its object, and the reflexive "oneself" is ineliminable from the specification "preserve oneself" or "kill oneself". So there is in suicide a direct opposition to life as an end, and this is why it is contrary to natural law and hence to charity. It is *the* direct attack on life as an end, or basic good.

To say this is contrary to the fundamental Grisez position, that the basic goods should not be attacked in oneself *or* in another. But love of one's neighbour in this matter means wanting him not to kill himself – not because Jones would be killing *Jones* but because he would be killing *himself*. This is why it is more upsetting when Jones kills Jones than when Smith does.

Brugger's criticism of Aquinas on the relation of the individual to the community is interesting, but his discussion of the idea that sin takes away human dignity is spoilt by his failure to distinguish between the question of whether one deserves a punishment, and the question whether a human society can prudently and equitably impose it as a penalty. We are born deserving death for the sin of Adam; no human government could rightly impose this penalty. We mostly deserve death for mortal sin; an equitable and prudent system of laws would only impose it where necessary. Brugger calls this "arbitrary".

He defends Grisez's doctrine about fundamental goods, and on intentional killing (and on when it *is* intentional) and calls for prison reform. He speaks of the "questionable hypothesis that God grants to some to do what is otherwise forbidden by the natural law". He does not address the problem of whether, when God ordered killing, the killing ceased to be intrinsically evil, and how. If he is not a Marcionite, he has to be able to answer this question, as Aquinas did.

MARY C. GEACH

VIOLENCE IN GOD'S NAME: RELIGION IN AN AGE OF CONFLICT by Oliver McTernan, *Darton Longman and Todd,* **London, 2003, Pp. 192, 10.95 pbk.**

Oliver McTernan's three years at Harvard University's Centre for International Affairs, have, on the evidence of this interesting book, been well spent. It filled me in large part with admiration, in small part with irritation. Because it does both it will certainly become a

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focus for discussion amongst all who are concerned about the impact of religion on society.

Religion, says McTernan, can be a major factor in conflict and must not be ignored or marginalised by those trying to find solutions to it. This immediately challenges religious leaders of various persuasions who, when faced with conflict in which their adherents are involved, attempt to convince us that the conflict is political or economic, but not religious. That has often been the reaction to "the Troubles" in Northern Ireland. Religious attitudes are not responsible, we are told. Religious communities are there to pick up the pieces and put on the plasters. It is this desire to disclaim responsibility that has, I suspect, led McTernan to conduct his research, and this book is the result.

He is all too right. Too often I have attended interfaith meetings at which the representatives of the faiths present have explained how peaceful all their sacred texts are. Any deviations have been the result of political or economic forces out of their control. To this McTernan replies, "Religion is rarely the sole cause [of killing] but it is central to the meaning of too many conflicts to be ignored . . . It has always demonstrated a propensity for violence regardless of the social and political conditions of its devotees". A further dimension of this has been brought into sharp focus by the action of the suicidal murderers on 11 September 2001. A letter left in a locker at Boston airport by their leader assures his companions " . . . we will all meet in highest heaven, God willing". Religious killing in the conviction that God will reward the killers has a long pedigree and comes from different faith traditions. It includes Zealots, Sicarii, Assassins, Thugs and Crusaders, amongst others.

McTernan does not neglect the peaceful ambitions of the major faiths and they are described in detail. It is good to be reminded in the light of current prejudice that "Islam in thought and practice has a long record of tolerance". St Francis of Assisi and Pope John XXIII get generous mention. Christians and Muslims need to be told that the call of the Talmud is "to seek peace and pursue it". But ideals apart, when faced with outside threat or internal oppression, all major religious traditions have found ways of squaring the circle. The *Bhagavad Gita* is full of peaceful ideals. But the history of Arjuna, the hero king, makes clear that sometimes the sword is both inevitable and praiseworthy. We Christians hardly need to be reminded of the just war thinking that followed the conversion of Constantine.

That the major faiths are not pacifist is not news, but that does not line them up with the murderers of September 11th. Terrorism is something different. McTernan himself says that his focus is solely on that form of religiously inspired violence "that is targeted at civilian populations . . . in order to effect political change or power

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shifts . . . " That there have been in history episodes of such religiously inspired violence is unhappily clear enough. That is why in a very positive conclusion McTernan calls for a new emphasis on tolerance – the conviction that, however much we hold to our beliefs, it is not for us to decide how many roads there are to God.

Why the irritation? For three reasons. No secular backdrop is really provided by which to judge religious terror. Terror, historically, has first of all been an act of governments. No mention is made of the epoch-dividing acts of terror of the twentieth century: the destruction of the cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and the deaths of some 200,000 civilians. Starvation blockade in Nigeria/Biafra, bubonic plague in China delivered by Japan, "shock and awe" inflicted on the people of Iraq: the list is a long one. My question is why religious groups so easily come to justify what their governments have done despite the precepts of their own traditions? How have governments managed so successfully to manipulate faith communities and why are those communities so easily manipulated? Perhaps it is because the most powerful religion of the day – by which I mean nationalism – is not recognised as idolatry. For every person who would kill for religion there are ninety-nine others who would kill for country. Lastly I wonder if enough is said about the failure of religious faiths to undertake positive peacemaking. Peace is not just saying no when a war is about to start. Peace is a permanent search for justice, for empathy, for understanding, for forgiveness, and sometimes for challenging the political and economic structures of the day.

McTernan has done us all a favour in facing up to questions that too often are avoided. Only good can come from some fresh air on these issues. His book is a valuable contribution to the UN's Decade for a Culture of Peace in which we are now living.

BRUCE KENT

NICOLAI MEDENSIS (DURANDELLI) EVIDENTIAE CONTRA DURANDUM edited by Prospero T. Stella [Corpus Philosophorum Medii Aevi vol. III], *Editiones Francke*, Tübingen & Basel, **2003, 2 vols., Pp. 566 + 1449.**

J. Koch placed Durandellus in the "front rank" of Dominican opponents of Durandus of Saint-Pourçain, and called his *Evidentiae* "the fullest and best" Thomist critique of the first version of Durandus's commentary on the Sentences (*Durandus de S. Porciano OP*, Münster 1927 p. 340); yet, for lack of a printed text, this work has received little attention. The lack has now been magnificently

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