

Free Markets and the Culture of Common Good

Ethical Economy. Studies in Economic Ethics and Philosophy

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Free Markets and the Culture of Common Good

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Preface and Acknowledgments

In this book, we have put together a puzzle of very different pieces. The differences stem from the origin, the discipline, and the professional dedication of the authors. What they have in common is their interest in economics and their conviction that the functioning of a Free Market Economy depends on sound cultural and ethical foundations. We hope that the emerging picture, if not comprehensive, does offer a representative view of an interdisciplinary approach to economy and economics.

Interdisciplinarity as an approach responds to the growing uneasiness with the methodological fragmentation in the social sciences and the wish for a more holistic method that does not ignore human personality, motivations, and ethical interiority. Of course, interdisciplinarity has its limits. Just putting different methodologies next to each other does not necessarily result in a complete picture; in fact, it may actually just enhance the sensation of grasping at unconnected strands of research in the search for something more. However, we think that in this book we have brought together authors who have managed to communicate with each other because, even though they may work in different fields or come from different walks of life, they are united by a basically shared set of values. This is a fact, which is all the more remarkable since the contributors profess and practice different religions.

Each of the authors is outstanding in his or her field: philosophy (Rhonheimer and Hittinger), economics (Das Neves, Cañadas, Baroni, and Argandoña), social sciences (Zamagni and Donati), and theology (Cordes and Schlag). Theory without practice can become an “ivory tower.” We, therefore, have invited well-known practitioners, many of them with academic affiliations, to give us their view on the subject in this book: experts in banking (Camdessus and Griffiths), politics (Buttiglione and Schneider), finance and social entrepreneurship (El-Khalil and Widmer), and journalism (Webber). This encounter between theory and practice enables a verification of scholarly learning, which otherwise might be endangered by too great an abstraction from reality.

This book is part of an ongoing endeavor of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome to center attention and interdisciplinary study on an in-depth view of economy and ethics. Through research and an educational and cultural program involving the world of business and finance, we hope to contribute to changing the

way the global economy works and to further developing the Catholic Church's moral teaching concerning social and economic questions. Therefore, Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical letter *Caritas in Veritate* appears frequently in the chapters.

In conclusion, we would like to make a few heartfelt acknowledgments. This book would not have been possible without the untiring work of Miss Jennifer E. Miller who not only corresponded with the contributors but also corrected and edited the manuscripts. She also put together the index. We are all indebted to her kind patience, and our first acknowledgment therefore goes to her.

We also cordially thank our publisher Springer for receiving our book in their prestigious house and for their patience in its production. Our thanks goes also to Prof. Peter Koslowski who has kindly accepted the book in his well-known series. Last but not least, we thank our contributors for entrusting their efforts and intellectual work to us. It has been lovely working together, and we think it was worthwhile.

Martin Schlag
Juan Andrés Mercado

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