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The Critical Calling: Reflections on Moral Dilemmas Since Vatican II (Moral Traditions series)

Richard A. McCormick

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When Richard A. McCormick's *The Critical Calling* was first published, Andrew M. Greeley commented that "in years to come scholars will look back on Father McCormick's work and say, 'This was a man who knew what he was talking about!'" In this reissue, with a new foreword by Lisa Sowle Cahill, both first-time readers and those opening the pages for a return visit with an honored friend will find Greeley's characterization remains valid.

Father McCormick begins *The Critical Calling* with his personal affirmation of the work of Vatican II: "I believe the Council was a work of the Spirit?desperately needed, divinely inspired, devotedly and doggedly carried through." Yet, he stresses this was no uncritical endorsement of everything the Council did and said. Part One includes a discussion of fundamental moral theology that looks at the relationship between the church hierarchy and individual moral decision making and several chapters addressing issues precipitated by actions involving Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI. Part Two focuses on practical and pastoral questions that touch on contemporary concerns ranging from abortion to AIDS, divorce, homosexuality, and teenage sexuality.

Cahill suggests that "those who lived through the tumultuous 1960s and '70s" as well as "those who came to maturity after the Council" will find this book to be an accurate and evocative reflection of the passions that imbued all those early debates and a helpful explanation why those passions ran so high. All readers will benefit from the wise insights into the controversies of that era and the more recent struggles, challenges, and debates that confront today's church.

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