



*A Subversive Gospel: Flannery O'Connor and the Reimagining of Beauty, Goodness, and Truth*

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*"O'Connor's aesthetic and theological approaches, her artistic and moral vision, her vocation and her life, were woven together into a unified whole that ineluctably led, through the medium of her craft, to a depiction of the terrible beauty, violent goodness, and foolish truth of God."*

## The Mystery of God's Subversive Love in the Works of Flannery O'Connor

Flannery O'Connor was perhaps the most deeply religious and theologically astute of major American fiction writers of the twentieth century. In this latest volume in IVP Academic's Studies in Theology and the Arts (STA) series, theologian Michael Bruner explores the moral and theological foundations of O'Connor's work and the little-known influence on her writing by Baron Friedrich von Hügel, a twentieth-century Roman Catholic theologian.

Though O'Connor's carefully crafted works are often shocking, her fiction subverts the conventional understanding of beauty, goodness, and truth, and challenges the materialism and too-comfortable spirituality that the world and the church often promote. Her writing awakens readers to understand that the good news of Jesus Christ is a subversive gospel, and following Jesus is a subversive act.

"[O'Connor] shouted and drew large and startling figures for a reason – and not just because her art demanded it, which it did, but because her stories were and are, finally, prophetic altar calls to a tired world," Bruner writes. "O'Connor's work . . . invites the reader to take seriously the inseparability of grace and nature, and accept the 'costingness' of Christian belief as a basic premise in her stories."

*A Subversive Gospel* continues the mission of IVP Academic's Studies in Theology and the Arts series, which seeks to enable Christians to reflect more deeply upon the relationship between their faith and humanity's artistic and cultural expressions. By drawing on the insights of both academic theologians and artistic practitioners, the series encourages thoughtful engagement with and critical discernment of the full variety of artistic media – including visual art, music, literature, film, theater, and more – which both embody and inform Christian thinking. Other titles in the STA series include *The Faithful Artist*, *Modern Art and the Life of a Culture*, and *Contemporary Art and the Church*.

"This series is an exciting and critically important development in the burgeoning theology and arts field," said Jeremy Begbie, professor of theology at Duke Divinity School and director of Duke Initiatives in Theology and the Arts. "It promises to advance the discussion in fresh and highly fruitful ways."

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