

# Created Freedom under the Sign of the Cross

*A Catholic Public Theology for the United States*

**David E. DeCosse**

The United States is in a crisis of freedom. Influenced by neoliberal economics, the concept of freedom has become identified with an abstract, radical individualism disdainful of responsibility to others and to the past. Signs of this crisis crop up everywhere. Some invoke freedom as justification for refusing to wear a mask in a pandemic. Others argue that freedom is an empty word if it's celebrated apart from an honest engagement with the country's history of racism.

*Created Freedom under the Sign of the Cross* offers a Catholic theological response to this crisis of freedom. Catholic social ethics may be better known for its emphasis on social principles like the common good and solidarity. But developments in Catholic theologies of freedom in the last decades provide fertile ground from which to develop a bold, creative response to this American crisis of freedom.

In this book, theologian David DeCosse draws on thinkers ranging from philosopher Amartya Sen to Black Catholic theologian Shawn Copeland to twentieth-century theological giant Karl Rahner in order to reimagine American freedom in light of classic Catholic emphases on embodiment, relationship, history, the good, and God. The result is a Catholic public theology that provides a redemptive path forward in an age of crisis.

“DeCosse superbly indicts the way Americans use ‘freedom’ to legitimate a value-free exercise of personal privilege. . . . In the end, he makes the compelling case for a more socially valid, embodied, and equitable grasp of freedom that can empower us, individually and collectively, to responsibly pursue our goals as a people. A well-done and much-needed work.”

—JAMES F. KEENAN, SJ, Boston College

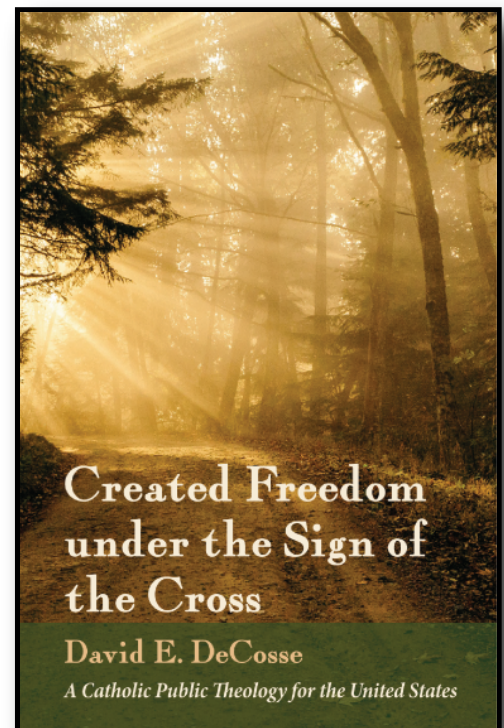
“DeCosse presents a much-needed alternative to the individualistic understandings of freedom so influential in the US today. Genuine freedom is sustained by human relationships, embedded in social history, and ultimately supported by the loving presence of God. A fine contribution to public theology in the Catholic tradition.”

—DAVID HOLLENBACH, SJ, Georgetown University

“DeCosse offers an American Catholic political theology that shows why ‘the land of the free’ is really not, and why true freedom takes more than ‘choices’ among too few options. This is a masterful and clear analysis of today’s most influential economic and political theories; and how the Catholic social vision of embodied, grounded, and relational freedom challenges and transcends them all.”

—LISA SOWLE CAHILL, Boston College

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