PREFACE

It is no easy task to publish a book when its many authors, located far from each other, represent a wide diversity of religious and secular traditions, intellectual disciplines, scholarly styles, and even viewpoints about the relationship between feminism, law and religion. Yet, this book is evidence of the enthusiasm, good will, and commitment that is possible when women work together toward understanding our common life on this earth, its difficulties and its joys. We remember the words attributed to Mother Teresa, "To show great love for God and our neighbor we need not do great things. It is how much love we put in the doing that makes our offering something beautiful for God."

We must especially thank all of the authors of this text, who worked so diligently to contribute their ideas though they were faced with the many challenges of women's lives: the death of parents, serious illness and challenges of aging in their families, demands of growing children, pregnancy, spousal needs for support, callings of their religious communities, and the manifold professional duties that women juggle out of theirsense of responsibility for the care of the world.

Like many such endeavors, this project also required the careful eyes and hands of our research assistants, Dina Nguyen and Molly Considine, and the meticulous work of Bethany Fletcher, administrative assistant at the University of St. Thomas School of Law. We thank our many colleagues who offered their moral support and enthusiasm for this project, and Ashgate Publishing for understanding the need for the emerging conversation represented by this text.

We dedicate this text to our future—Lisa's children Anna, Joseph, Peter and Katherine, Susan's daughter Elena and nieces Brittany, Danielle, Kara and Kristen; Marie's daughters and son-in-law Joanna, Kristina and Kelly, and grandsons Isaiah, Cristian and Jaxson. We do so with our love, and in the hope thattheir lives, nurtured by the faith that we have taught them, will reflect compassion and respect for each other as men and women created in the image of God.

Elizabeth Schiltz, Susan Stabile
and Marie Failinger, Editor

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