

THE THIRD SWORD

Prophets are wild cards in the game of politics, James Bernard Murphy writes in this startling new book. They risk their lives by calling out the abuses of political and religious leaders, forcing us to confront evils we would prefer to ignore. By setting moral limits on political leaders, prophets chasten our political pretensions and remind us there are values that transcend politics. They wield a third sword distinct from the familiar swords of state and church power – their sword is the word of God. *The Third Sword* offers a new take on political history, illustrating a theory of prophetic politics through tales of political crises, interspersed with direct dialogue between the prophets and their persecutors. With chapters on Socrates, Jesus, Joan of Arc, Thomas More, and Martin Luther King, Jr., Murphy brings these prophets to life with storytelling that blends biography, history, and political theory.

James Bernard Murphy is Professor of Government at Dartmouth College. In addition to his scholarly books, he has published books for a wider audience such as *How to Think Politically* (with Graeme Garrard, 2019), which has been translated into five languages to date. His book *Haunted by Paradise: A Philosopher's Quest for Biblical Answers to Key Moral Questions* (2021) is a primer on biblical ethics.

THE THIRD SWORD

On the Political Role of Prophets

James Bernard Murphy

Dartmouth College



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*For John Dylan, Catherine Ann, Timothy Lancaster, and the
memory of Daniel Leroy*

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