



Scholasticism and Politics

Jacques Maritain

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Jacques Maritain was deeply engaged in the intellectual and political life of France through the turbulent decades that included the two world wars. Accordingly, his philosophical reflections often focus on an attempt to discover man's role in sustaining a social and political order that seeks and maintains both liberty and peace.

Scholasticism and Politics, first published in 1940, is a collection of nine lectures Maritain delivered at the University of Chicago in 1938. While the lectures address a variety of diverse topics, they explore three broad topics: 1) the nature of modern culture, its relationship to Christianity, and the origins of the crisis which has engulfed it; 2) the true nature and authentic foundations of human freedom and dignity and the threats posed to them by the various materialist and naturalistic philosophies that dominate the modern cultural scene; and 3) the principles that provide the authentic foundation of a social order in accord with human dignity.

Maritain championed the cause of what he called personalist democracy—a regime committed to popular sovereignty, constitutionalism, limited government, and individual freedom. He believed a personalist democracy offered the modern world the possibility of a political order most in keeping with the demands of human dignity, Christian values, and the common good.

Jacques Maritain (1882–1973) was a political thinker and French philosopher and is widely recognized as one of the most influential interpreters of Thomistic thought to modern culture.

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