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Disciplinary Responses to Theology Brief Preview

LOVE, JUSTICE, AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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As expected, I find Professor O'Donovan's brief essay rich and profound, and I look forward to the longer, more developed essay. I find especially helpful his linking of love to knowledge and his suggestive treatment of the differentiation of loving practices, e.g., that love sometimes requires fidelity to agreement and sometimes flexibility. As a student of international relations, I am of course most interested in the closing bit on love and justice. I would be interested in what Professor O'Donovan has to say about how confronting the possibility of tension between these two goods can help us think and act toward and within our own respective modern states, toward other states, and toward the international system. I am thinking especially of the ambivalence many Christians feel between loyalty to country or nation, on the one hand, and loyalty to humanity or the world, on the other. E.g., we might assert two things at once:

1. That just as one ought to love one's family more than society, one ought to love one's nation or people more than humanity;

2. That justice does not tolerate any special duty to one's nation.

That is only one possible form the tension could take. The positions might even be reversed (viz. special treatment of one's nation is intolerable to love but demanded by justice).

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