John Paul II and Political Realism; "Defending Human Dignity" by Derek S. Jeffreys

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In "Defending Human Dignity," Derek Jeffreys argues that Pope John Paul II's combined understanding of philosophy and politics uniquely qualified him to offer a viable, Christian alternative to the reigning political philosophy of realism and its resulting consequentialism. The pope prioritized the dignity of the human person while calling the political tendency to systematically dominate others exactly what it is: structural sin. Jeffreys argues that the pope, by refusing to allow utilitarianism to elevate the lowest values to the highest, held a philosophical position that was not only linked to global action but is also a significant guide for international politics today.

Praise for "Defending Human Dignity"

"This unusually accomplished first book makes dramatically clear what the thought of the present pope has to offer to all Christians—a vision of how peace ought properly to be sought."
--Paul J. Griffiths, University of Illinois at Chicago

"For those unfamiliar with the influence of Scheler on the thought of John Paul II, this book is a welcome introduction. However, Jeffreys also helpfully puts his account of the pope's moral and political thought in conversation with the realist school of international relations. Jeffreys has begun a conversation that needs to take place."
--Stanley Hauerwas, Duke Divinity School

"This is a very valuable book. There are many treatments of the various aspects of John Paul II’s philosophy, but very few that study the application of his philosophy to practical political thinking on the international scale, as does this one."
--W. Norris Clarke, S.J., Fordham University

Derek S. Jeffreys is assistant professor of humanistic studies and religion at the University of Wisconsin, Green Bay. He holds a Ph.D. in religious ethics from the University of Chicago. Jeffreys has written the introduction to a recent edition of William James's distinguished work The Varieties of Religious Experience and was recently awarded a Templeton Foundation teaching fellowship.

"Defending Human Dignity" by Derek Jeffreys is now available from Brazos Press

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Contact Information
Kara Day
Brazos Press
http://www.brazospress.com/defendinghumandignity
616 676-9185

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