

## Call for papers

The twenty-first century state in Catholic social teaching  
*Solidarity: The Journal of Catholic Social Teaching and Secular Ethics*  
<http://researchonline.nd.edu.au/solidarity/>

The functions, competence and power of government have grown enormously since Leo XIII set out the obligations of the state to protect the economically weak and defenceless in modern society in *Rerum novarum* (1891). In the course of the twentieth century world wars and totalitarian regimes demonstrated how massively destructive the modern state can be, while in the second half of the century the enormous expansion of education, healthcare, aged care, and welfare and development programs demonstrated the capacity of the state to improve lives and build a better society. The early twenty-first century has seen an emerging push-back from various quarters against the unwinding of such social supports under neo-liberalism, and the tension between states controlling and optimising the new forms of surveillance offered by internet technologies. How well has Catholic social teaching kept pace with these changes in the role and reach of the state? Where does work need to be done so that Catholic social teaching can encompass the power and limits of the state in the twenty-first century?

This special edition of *Solidarity* calls for papers addressing the development of the Catholic understanding of the role and responsibility of the state in our age, drawing on fields such as Moral Theology, Moral Philosophy, History, Political Science and Sociology.

Some possible topics for examination could include but are not limited to:

- The competence of the state: What are the origins and nature of the modern state's authority? What are the principles that should determine the limits or extension of its competence? What is the extent of the state's moral competence (ie: its responsibility to defend fundamental human rights or to foster the common good) and what is the source of this responsibility? What is the nature of the state's relationship to society? What duties do citizens owe to the state and why? What is the relationship between religion and the state?
- Freedom and tyranny: How have Catholic understandings of democracy changed over time? What is the purpose of political freedom in complex, diverse, secular societies? Does democracy entail moral commitments on the part of the state? If so, on what basis are they determined? What does Catholic social teaching say about non-democratic forms of government? Can they ever

properly serve the common good and human flourishing? What are the responsibilities of Christians and others committed to justice and freedom living under unjust or tyrannical governments? When is revolution justified?

- The failure of the state: What has the experience of the twentieth century taught us about the failure of the state? What happens when states seek to dominate society and the economy? What are the sources of resilience and independence in society which can resist this? What happens when states collapse? How do societies establish or re-establish effective government? What happens when states, including democracies, lose legitimacy? How is confidence and trust in government restored and fostered? How is a just state developed and sustained?

Abstracts of 100-300 words, accompanied with a current CV, are to be mailed by the author to Solidarity at [sydney.solidarity@nd.edu.au](mailto:sydney.solidarity@nd.edu.au) by 30 June 2018.