

5th Annual International
Summer School and Conference

Beyond Secular Faith

POLITICS AS THEOLOGY

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Granada- Spain



The Theopolitical Vision of G. K. Chesterton and J. R. R. Tolkien

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DESCRIPTION

Chesterton and Tolkien were writing at a time when Catholic Social Teaching based on the encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) was seeking a Christian sociality which avoided the extremes of communism and unfettered capitalism. Their fiction (and Chesterton's non-fiction) tests political programmes in the light of the gospel and moves to offer a fully and implicitly religious conception of what it means to be human and in community. In particular their concept of work has particular relevance for our care of creation, but they also have much to offer on how we can relate different levels of identity: local, national and universal. We shall begin with the theological anthropology of both writers, moving to how humans can engage politically and participate in social decision-making. The theology of work and our stewardship of creation leads to a consideration of the politics of Distributism, which Chesterton embraced and which Stratford Caldecott has detected in Tolkien's presentation of the Shire.

CONTENTS

- Seminar 1 Theopolitics of the person/GKC, *The Everlasting Man*, JRRT's Tom Bombadil
- Seminar 2 Participation and belonging/ GKC, *The Napoleon of Notting Hill*
- Seminar 3 The dignity of work as co-creation/ JRRT, *Fellowship of the Ring*
- Seminar 4 Distributism/GKC, *The Outline of Sanity*

METHODOLOGY

Seminar discussion; commentary of texts

EVALUATION

Participation in discussion