



# Love and the Dignity of Human Life: On Nature and Natural Law

*By Robert Spaemann*

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What does it mean to love someone? What does the concept of human dignity mean, and what are its consequences? What marks the end of a person's life? Is personhood more than consciousness? These perplexing questions lurk beneath the surface of everyday life, surfacing only to demand urgent attention in crises.

Renowned German philosopher Robert Spaemann addresses these and other foundational enigmas in three eloquent short essays. Speaking wisdom to controversy, he offers carefully considered, novel approaches to key philosophical and theological questions about the nature of human love ("The Paradoxes of Love"), dignity ("Human Dignity and Human Nature"), and death ("Is Brain Death the Death of a Human Person?").

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Review

### **Oliver O'Donovan**

-- University of Edinburgh

"These three essays by Robert Spaemann will make an excellent first encounter (it is unlikely to be the last) for readers who do not yet know the probing and delicate thought of this distinguished German Catholic moral philosopher, equally at home in the traditional themes of Western Christian philosophy and in the technicalities of contemporary problems posed by technology. Two chapters that distill lines of thought from Spaemann's major works, *Happiness and Benevolence* and *Persons*, lead to a memorably stinging critique of brain-death criteria in transplant surgery. This is Christian thoughtfulness at its most engaging."

### **Holger Zaborowski**

-- Catholic University of America

"Robert Spaemann is one of the leading contemporary German philosophers. In many groundbreaking works he has thought about what it means to be a person. Persons, he argues, 'have' their nature and are free; they are not simply their nature. This is why there is a special dignity of the person. This insight is extremely important but often forgotten. In these timely (and very accessible) essays, Spaemann reminds us about who a person is -- and how we can live humanly. Everyone who cares about the human person, not just the professional philosopher, will be grateful for this book!"

### ***Journal of Reformed Theology***

"The highlights of *Love and the Dignity of Human Life* are numerous. . . . The prose is engaging and dynamic. . . . Spaemann's thought is comprehensive and integrated. . . . Spaemann is judicious and careful in his moral reasoning."

### ***Reviews in Religion & Theology***

"An accessible thematic introduction to Spaemann's rich and complex thought. . . . These essays, powerful and evocative in demonstrating the range and complexity of Spaemann's thought, offer a powerful introduction to his work."

## **About the Author**

Robert Spaemann is professor emeritus of philosophy at the University of Munich. His many books in German and English include *Persons: The Difference between "Someone" and "Something"* and *Happiness and Benevolence*.

David L. Schindler is Edouard Cardinal Gagnon Professor of Fundamental Theology at the Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at The Catholic University of America, Washington DC.

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