Among Christian theologians and ethicists, human rights and human dignity have fallen on hard times. Talk of human rights, they say, encourages unwarranted self-regard. Talk of human dignity tends to be either too abstract and thus morally unhelpful or too determinate and thus exclusionary.

In this paper, I address these worries by considering Aquinas's account of the natural law, of our status as persons subject to divine rule, of the fact that we are citizens to a sovereign not slaves to master. It's this status—citizens of a divine commonwealth—that, for Thomas, accounts for our shared human dignity and gives it normative punch. By virtue of this political status, this dignity, we have a basic right not to be dominated, a right not to be subject to the arbitrary power of another. I conclude by highlighting the relevance of Thomas’s account for contemporary discourses of human dignity and human rights, both religious and secular.

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**5:00 pm Tribble Hall B316**

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