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| Sommario/riassunto      | <p>Saint Augustine's political thought has usually been interpreted by modern readers as suggesting that politics is based on sin. In Augustine and Politics as Longing in the World, John von Heyking shows that Augustine actually considered political life a substantive good that fulfills a human longing for a kind of wholeness. Rather than showing Augustine as supporting the Christian church's domination of politics, von Heyking argues that he held a subtler view of the relationship between religion and politics, one that preserves the independence of political life. And while many see his politics as based on a natural-law ethic or on one in which authority is conferred by direct revelation, von Heyking shows how Augustine held to an understanding of political ethics that emphasizes practical wisdom and judgment in a mode that resembles Aristotle rather than Machiavelli. Augustine and Politics as Longing in the World demonstrates some of the deficiencies in the way Augustine's political thought has been interpreted. It also explains why a rereading of his thought illuminates the current debates between "secularists" and proponents of "orthodoxy" and shows why these debates are miscast. By examining Augustine's political thought, von Heyking provides a way of resolving this controversy and shows how we can move beyond conflicting claims and thus moderate yet elevate political life. Behind Augustine's apparent antipolitical rhetoric lies his substantial agreement with his Roman philosophical interlocutors on virtue and politics. This allegedly</p> |

antipolitical rhetoric is meant to tame the lust for domination of Roman patriots by showing that lust can never be satisfied by political goods. By opposing extreme "worldliness" with extreme "otherworldliness," Augustine appears to reject politics as a natural good. On the contrary, he affirmed politics as a natural good. Augustine and Politics as Longing in the World shows how Augustine's belief that politics was a way for humans to fulfill their longings for a kind of wholeness discloses a deeper affirmation of a more meaningful, pluralistic, and robust political life than his interpreters have previously appreciated.

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