



Religion in Public Life.  
Studies in Political Theology  
and Political Philosophy

| 1

Sergio Gadea Caballero

# Loving your Neighbor in a Secular Age

Agape in the Philosophy  
of Charles Taylor

VERLAG KARL ALBER





**Religion in Public Life.  
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Volume 1

Sergio Gadea Caballero

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I am deeply grateful to Charles Taylor for the opportunity to engage his work in a sustained and demanding way. His extraordi-

## Acknowledgments

nary body of work provided me with a rigorous entry point into several central debates in contemporary philosophy and offered a way of thinking attentive to history, lived experience, and the conditions under which people make fundamental decisions and seek meaning in their lives. I am also personally grateful for his kindness in receiving me and for the generosity with which he gave time to my questions, an encounter that helped clarify and sharpen the concerns that lie at the heart of this book.

I am a Jesuit, and this work is the result of a mission entrusted to me by the Society of Jesus: the study of philosophy in the field of secularization and the attempt to understand the conditions under which belief is lived today. That mission led me, among other things, to the thought of Charles Taylor. I am deeply thankful to the superiors who entrusted me with this task, for their confidence and for the generosity with which they granted me extended time for study. In a particular way, I wish to thank Manuel García Bonasa, SJ, my spiritual director during most of these years, for helping me through what may be one of the most demanding challenges of doctoral work: discerning an apostolic meaning in the sustained and often demanding labor of study.

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I became a companion of Jesus with a clear awareness not only of the commitment to faith proper to my religious order, but also

of the pursuit of justice. I have grown within the Society shaped by the three verbs articulated by Ignacio Ellacuría, SJ: *hacerse cargo*—to take reality seriously; *cargar*—to bear its weight; and *encargarse*—to act upon it and seek its transformation. I have been fortunate to walk alongside friends, Jesuit and lay alike, who have made these verbs both horizon and practice, through concrete choices and visible fruits in the struggle for justice. I have also seen, up close, the cost sometimes of such fidelity: weariness, disappointment, suffering, and the slow erosion of hope. Beneath this book lies the question of a fourth verb—*recargarse*: where one learns again how to draw breath, how to be renewed when the weight becomes too heavy, and the horizon seems closed. Where can one return to a source of motivation that does not deceive, that does not exhaust, that allows one to remain faithful even when reality does not respond, when change is imperceptible, and when fruits do not appear?

This book is dedicated to those who have taught me, through their lives, that love—*agape*—is not only the deepest motivation, but the most truthful answer.



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