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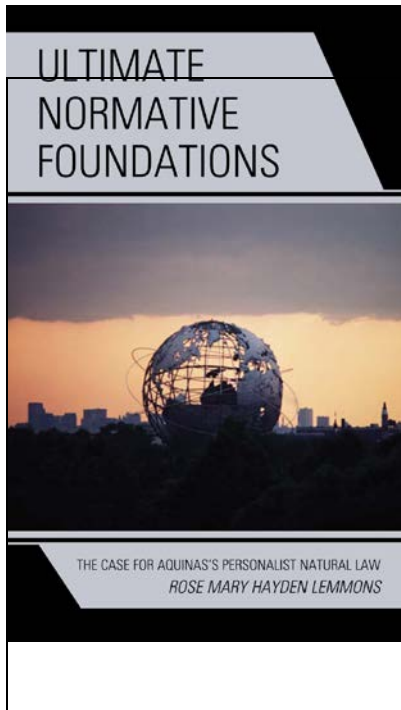
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Ultimate Normative Foundations: The Case for Personalist Natural Law focuses on two features of morality and law that most normative paradigms ignore. The first of these is the indefeasibility of moral obligations that prevents moral agents from exempting themselves from culpability, and the second is the universality of certain norms (such as the proscription of genocide or the Golden Rule). Rose Mary Hayden Lemmons explores the foundations of normativity and exposes the weaknesses inherent in key normative theories. She argues that today's popular normative paradigms cannot adequately explain or justify the universality and indefeasibility of any moral or juridical obligation; this explanation and justification is provided instead by the personalist natural law formulated by Thomas Aquinas in terms of a love of God and neighbor distinct from Christian charity and updated by John Paul II in terms of liberty, inalienable rights, and personalism. Personalist natural law establishes the parameters of interpersonal relationships that enable each of us to flourish while establishing indefeasible and universal obligations that hold across the globe. At the same time, it retains the ability to do the work of a robust natural law and justify an insightful cross-cultural jurisprudence and virtue ethics. These considerations will have strong implications for any academic concerned with philosophy, theology, or law.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rose Mary Hayden Lemmons is associate professor of philosophy at the University of St. Thomas in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

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