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ULTIMATE NORMATIVE FOUNDATIONS THE CASE FOR AQUINAS'S PERSONALIST NATURAL LAW

BY ROSE MARY HAYDEN LEMMONS

"Here is an ambitious and compelling presentation of Thomistic natural law theory as 'personalist,' that is, centered on fulfilling the good of the human person, especially 'the intellect's thirst for truth and the will's thirst for goodness.' The fresh and forceful approach of Rose Mary Hayden Lemmons shows once again the capacious power of Thomistic philosophical ethics to address the most persistent questions in moral philosophy and the most difficult practical issues of jurisprudence and politics. Lemmons is not the first to argue that eudaimonism generally, and Thomistic natural law theory in particular, best account for indefeasible and universal obligations; but in her sensitive and fully contemporary engagement with theoretical and practical questions, she has advanced the philosophical conversation and the Catholic intellectual tradition."

—**Joshua P. Hochschild**, Mount St. Mary's University

Rose Mary Hayden Lemmons deserves gratitude for providing this comprehensive introduction to a Thomistic personalist account of moral normativity as well as its dominant alternatives and criticisms. She retrieves Thomistic natural law through the lens of the normative demands of love. Students and teachers of moral philosophy and theology will enjoy this vigorous defense of the relevance of Thomistic thought for contemporary political and moral issues. The wonderful assemblage of quotes from Aquinas and other authors across the tradition in itself makes reading the book a profitable experience."

—**Michael Dauphinais**, Ave Maria University

ABOUT THE BOOK

This book establishes that normativity has necessary characteristics explicable only through the natural law formulation developed by Aquinas and based on loving God and neighbor, albeit understood in terms other than Christian charity and updated according to the personalism of John Paul II. The resulting personalist natural law can counter objections rising from classical and contemporary metaethics, moral diversity, undeserved suffering, antithetical interpretations of Aquinas's natural law, and alternative ethical theories, e.g., atheistic eudaimonism. Also established are the virtues of love; the nature of indefeasibility, moral objectivity, human flourishing, and Thomistic self-evidence; the relationship between the Bonum Precept (good is to be done and pursued; evil is to be avoided) and the love precepts (God is to be loved above all; neighbors are to be loved as oneself) as well as specific moral and legal obligations. These specifications update the nature of the common good, Just War Theory, the warrant for capital punishment, environmental obligations, and the basis for universal, unalienable rights, including religious liberty. The Appendix sketches the history of natural law from its origins in ancient Greek philosophy and Roman law, through developments during the Enlightenment and the American revolution, to contemporary incarnations. Overall, the book's scope and detailed arguments make it a comprehensive resource for those interested in normative foundations, justifying morality's objectivity and universality, global jurisprudence, and recasting Thomistic natural law in terms of personalist love.

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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