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Editorial Introduction

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

JOHN FINNIS AND GERARD V. BRADLEY

The nine articles in this Symposium on Natural Law and Human Fulfillment emerge from a two-day conference at Notre Dame Law School in April 2001. The conference was organized by the Natural Law Institute, in particular by us as editors of this journal, to mark the publication, thirty-five years earlier, of Germain Grisez's foundational essay, "The First Principle of Practical Reason: A Commentary on the *Summa Theologiae*, 1-2, Question 94, Article 2," *Natural Law Forum* 10 (1965) 168-201. We invited Germain Grisez to revisit the themes or matter of that essay, by way of a lecture in the series of annual Natural Law Lectures, and asked a dozen scholars, known to be of very diverse viewpoints, to comment on his lecture. Grisez distributed a draft of the lecture to the commentators some months in advance, indicating that he would not revise his draft before the lecture and symposium but would do so afterwards, before publishing it. The commentators' papers were also made available to participants before the conference. The conference was, accordingly, a well-focused and lively scholarly occasion.

At the end of the conference, two different ways of proceeding towards publication were considered by the participants. One would be to make only slight revisions to the lecture and comments, and for the lecturer to make such reply as he might wish to make either by inserting new material in bracketed text or footnotes, or in a final response. The other would be for the lecturer to revise his lecture as much as he thought fit in the light of the comments and conference discussion, and then to distribute the new version of the lecture to the commentators, who might accordingly choose to revise their commentaries, write substantially new ones, or, in view of the necessary deadlines, withdraw from the extended process altogether. The second way of proceeding was more in line with Germain Grisez's expectations, and was adopted. Thus, Grisez's lecture now published is a substantially revised version of the lecture he delivered, and the revisions are intended to meet those objections or misunderstandings which he thought noteworthy in the pre-conference commentaries and conference discussions.

This way of proceeding has some consequences that readers should bear in mind. The eight commentaries now published are responses, not to the original lecture, but to the revised version now published. Accordingly, they may, and in several cases do, contain substantially or even entirely new comments, objections, and perhaps misunderstandings, which Grisez has not had the opportunity to consider, respond to, or correct. In this symposium, the commentators have the last word.

Here and there in the commentaries, readers will find a number of claims about Aquinas's position which seem to us clearly mistaken. Similarly mistaken, we think, are certain claims—not least in some confidently expressed footnotes—about Grisez's position, and the position of those who have worked with him in natural law theory during the past thirty-five years. That some authoritative-sounding but simply erroneous claims about the evolution, intentions, and content of Grisez's position stand unanswered here and now is a bad side effect of the choice between the two ways of proceeding described above. Still, one can correct for these errors and misreadings, in almost all cases, by going to the pages of Grisez's and his colleagues' works cited in his lecture or in the commentaries, and reading or re-reading those pages in their context. Particularly relevant, and still widely overlooked or under-read, is the first volume of his *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, published in 1983 as *Christian Moral Principles*.

Another foreseen and regretted side effect of the chosen way of proceeding was that, in the limited time available, not every commentator at the conference could undertake the reworking made necessary or desirable by the conference discussions or the revisions to the lecture.

The work of recovery, reconsideration, and renovation of fundamentals, begun in Grisez's 1965 essay, has proved solid and fruitful to a degree that could not then have been foreseen. In large measure, this is because it has remained always work in progress, open always to discussion from every angle. This symposium takes its place in that process.