



Religion and Public Reasons: Collected Essays Volume V (Collected Essays of John Finnis)

John Finnis

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The essays in Religion and Public Reasons seek to argue for, and illustrate, a central element of John Finnis's theory of natural law: that the main tenets of personal and political morality, and of a good legal order, are taught both by reason (arguments accessible to everyone) and by authentic divine revelation (teachings accessible to all who have a reasonable faith in its witnesses).

The author's main books each include arguments for rejecting atheism and agnosticism; several papers here take up these arguments and indicate ways in which they open onto the reasonable grounds for accepting that more about God's nature, and about the meaning of Creation (including ongoing natural evolution), is disclosed by the revelation carried far forward among the Jewish people, and given definitive form by the Jews and Greeks who assembled in the universal Church, as witnesses of Christ, to carry forward that revelation into our present. Several papers argue that "public reason" properly includes such a religion, and that Humeian, Nietzschean, Deweyian, Rawlsian or other atheistical or deistic understandings of a reasonable secularism are badly mistaken.

Many substantial papers record the author's position in controversies within Catholicism since the 1960s: on social justice, contraception and abortion; nuclear deterrence; Newman on conscience before pope; Maritain's hopes for a new Christendom and von Balthasar's for a hell empty of human persons; and on "proportionalism" and Lonerganian "historical consciousness" as moral-theological methods.

Previously unpublished papers include several University and college sermons, and a substantial introduction.

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