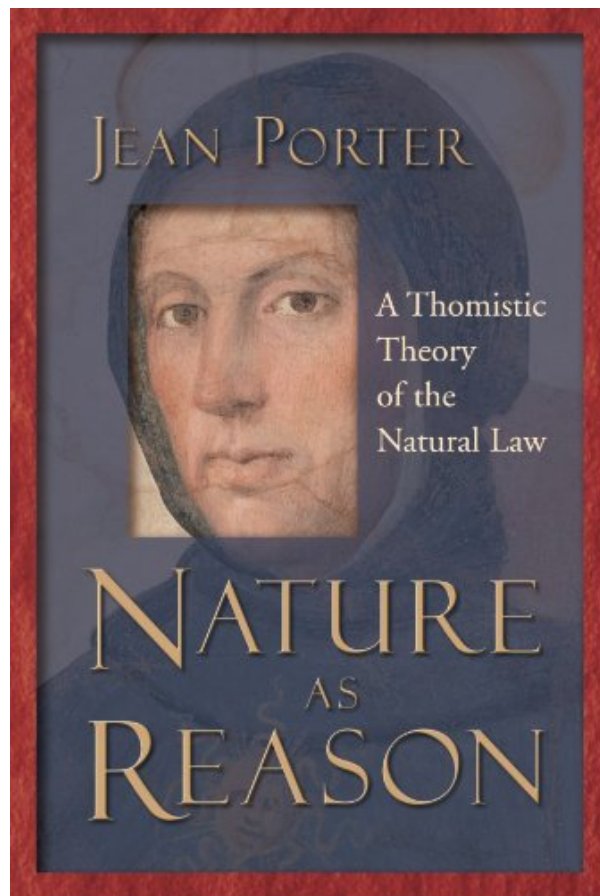
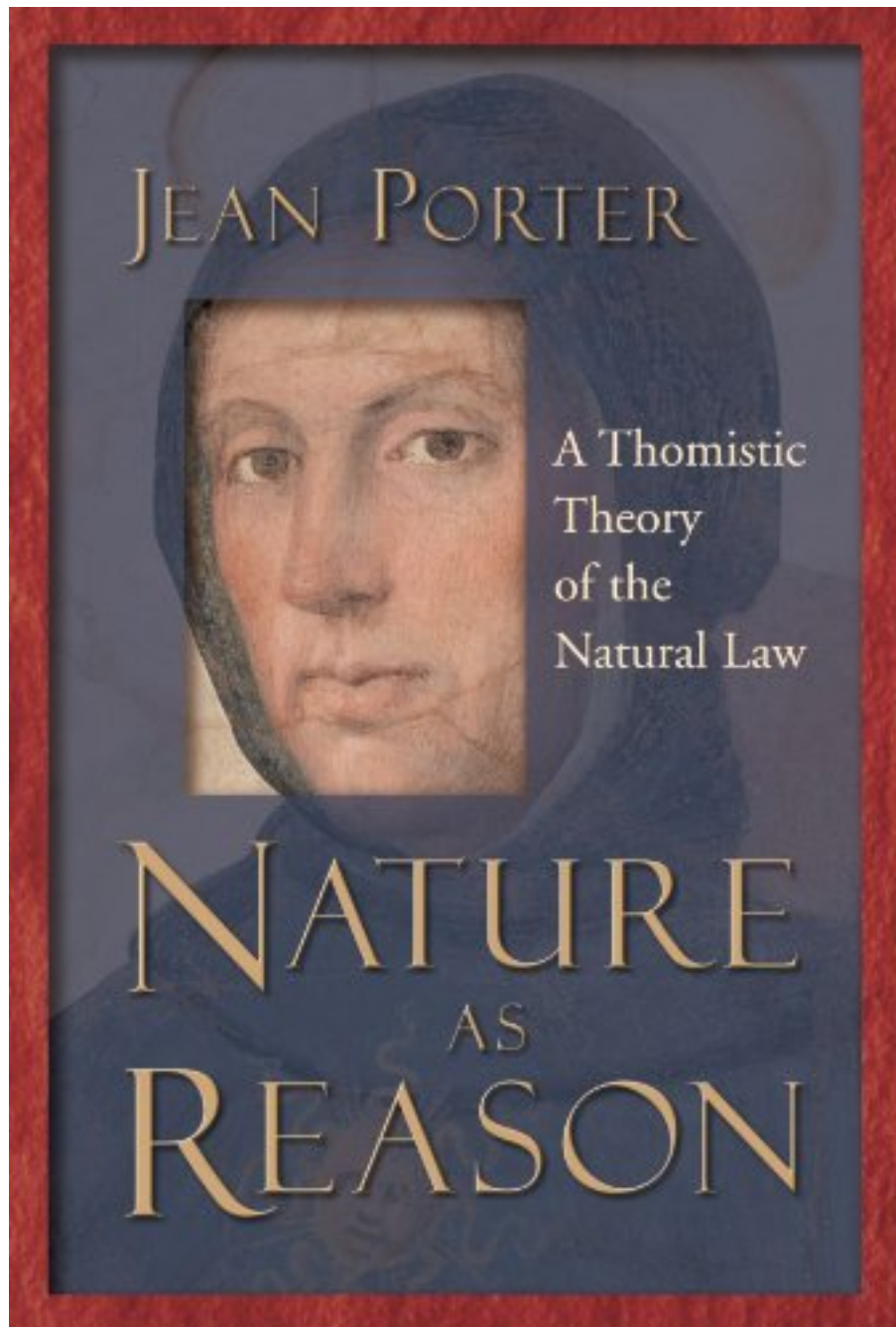


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This noteworthy book develops a new theory of the natural law that takes its orientation from the account of the natural law developed by Thomas Aquinas, as interpreted and supplemented in the context of scholastic theology in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Though this history might seem irrelevant to twenty-first-century life, Jean Porter shows that the scholastic approach to the natural law still has much to contribute to the contemporary discussion of Christian ethics. Aquinas and his interlocutors provide a way of thinking about the natural law that is distinctively theological while at the same time remaining open to other intellectual perspectives, including those of science.

In the course of her work, Porter examines the scholastics' assumptions and beliefs about nature, Aquinas's account of happiness, and the overarching claim that reason can generate moral norms. Ultimately, Porter argues that a Thomistic theory of the natural law is well suited to provide a starting point for developing a more nuanced account of the relationship between specific beliefs and practices. While Aquinas's approach to the natural law may not provide a system of ethical norms that is both universally compelling and detailed enough to be practical, it does offer something that is arguably more valuable -- namely, a way of reflecting theologically on the phenomenon of human morality.

## About the Author

Jean Porter is John A. O'Brien Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame. Her books include *Natural and Divine Law* and *Nature as Reason*.

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I read this book for an ethics class this semester and I find myself continuing to refer to it for its insights into natural law, the virtues, and Thomistic thought. The book is demanding, but it rewards a close reading with serious arguments and keen insights. Porter provides important arguments for natural law by actively engaging its critics and, in my opinion, overcoming their objections. Her defense is not so much of Thomistic thought as it was in the 13th century, but a defense of the extension of Thomistic thought into a modern environment. More importantly, the goal of her project is to find space in which theology and ethics can be reunited. This is an excellent book and I would highly recommend it.

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