

ETHICS AND ETHICAL ISSUES

Resources and notes for part 3

On The Threshold

Year 13 Religious Education



3.2 APPROACHES TO ETHICS

THE ORIGINS OF ETHICS

People who are taught what is good and right will act morally

A good person is one whose life is directed by a mature and educated reason

Moral or right actions are those that bring about the most positive consequence for human life

Socrates

(469 - 399 BCE)

Plato

(427 - 347 BCE)

Aristotle

(200-320 BCE)

What does the Lord require of you?to keep the commandments and love your neighbor as yourself
(Deut 10:12-13)

Jewish Torah
(~ 800 BCE)

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.
(Matthew 7:12)

Jesus of Nazareth
(~ 4 BCE - 29CE)

They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience bears witness (Romans 2:15)

St Paul
(died 64 CE)

Love, and do what you like.

St Augustine
(354 -430 CE)

In order for a war to be just, three things are necessary. First, the authority of the sovereign. Secondly, a just cause. Thirdly, a rightful intention

St Thomas Aquinas
(1225 -1274CE)

SOURCES OF CATHOLIC ETHICS

- ◉ **Revelation.** In the Catholic tradition there are two primary sources of revelation, Scripture and Tradition.
 - **Sacred Scripture.**
 - The inspired Word of God.
 - An authoritative source of moral teaching.
 - Needs to be interpreted according to the living Tradition.
 - **Sacred Tradition**
 - Particular teachings about ethical issues.
 - Knowing what the Church believes and teaches informs conscience.

- ◉ **Natural Law.** Natural Law is the innate understanding of the human person about what is right or wrong. It is a sense that human beings know when an action is wrong.



Through natural law, human beings attempt to grasp the mind of God and his will for humanity and the world. Natural law presumes that the Creator ordered the world for the good of all creatures and placed within the hearts of human beings an ability to understand that order to some degree and to exercise their freedom consistent with it. The Tradition has always suggested that natural law is based primarily on human reason.

The Essential Moral Handbook, K. O'Neil & P. Black, 2003