Are humans intrinsically good?

Natural Law

Aquinas built upon Aristotle's Natural Law and the idea that the universe has a natural order that works to achieve an 'end' or 'purpose' (telos).

Aquinas believed there were 5 ends (purposes) for which human beings have been created.

1. To protect life
2. To live harmoniously in society
3. To reproduce
4. To learn
5. To worship God

Any action which provides a means to these ends is considered 'good'.

The natural law is nothing other than the light of understanding placed in us by God; through it we know what we must do and what we must avoid" (St Augustine)

Ethical Decisions

Ethics = *ethos* 'character'
Morality = *moralis* 'customs' or 'manners'
Moral- ethically good or allowed
Immoral – not good/allowed
Amoral - unconcerned with the rightness or wrongness of something
: a person who does not eat meat.

Utilitarianism

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do as well as what we shall do'

Bentham

'All humans are motivated by pleasure and pain'

Pleasure= Good

Pain= evil

'The right actions are those that promote the most good'

Situation Ethics

Situation Ethics – the idea that Christians should base moral decisions on what is the most loving thing to do.

Agape – Selfless love (caring for others)

• Love should be the only principle upon which to make moral choices

• A good action is one which aims to do the most loving thing. It is based on the teaching of Jesus *'My command is this: love each other as I have loved you.'* (John 15: 12)

• A person should only obey the rules in the Bible or the Church if that teaching results in the most loving thing to do.

Absolute and Relative

Absolute Morality - the belief that an action is right or wrong, no matter what the circumstances.

Relative morality – the belief that right or wrong depends on the circumstances

Making moral decisions is not easy and there are many different sources which lead us into making decisions. Some are external such as parents or the law and some are inbuilt such as our conscience

"Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith"