

COMPONENT 3 – Religion and Ethics

To be read in conjunction with the general marking instructions and generic band descriptors provided.

1. (a) **Explain John Finnis' development of Aquinas' Natural Law.** [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.

- Aquinas' Natural Law was an ethic based on our God given reason, which is the basic of Natural Law, this in turn leads to the establishment of five primary precepts.
- John Finnis' twentieth century development of Natural Law does not however pre-suppose a divine being. Instead he concentrated on reasoning a set of 'goods' from which a good life can be generated.
- The 'goods' cannot be derived from God's law or theoretical reasoning but if you deny them, you cannot get anywhere in the realm of practical reason. The seven basic goods are self-evident. These goods cannot be broken down to a more basic level and therefore are referred to as basic goods.
- Candidates should demonstrate an understanding of the seven basic goods: friendship and sociability, life, play (for its own sake), knowledge (for its own sake), aesthetics, religion and practical reasoning.
- To achieve the above basic goods, moral agents need to fulfil nine principles of Practical Reason. These requirements are self-evident in the same way that the basic goods are self-evident. For example, view your life as a whole, do not become obsessed, never commit an act that directly harms a basic good, etc. They create the optimum conditions to attain the basic goods.
- Finnis also proposes a 'First Moral Principle'. This is the idea that we act for the good of the community as a whole not just as an individual. Humans naturally need to live in groups. This is both required expressly by the basic good of Sociability, and implicitly by all the other goods, because humans are most productive when they are working together.
- One of the nine requirements of practical reason is 'Contribute to the common good.' The common good is the situation where each member of the community can effectively pursue the basic goods for themselves. Such whole community action needs co-ordination; however, this requires authority (but not necessarily coercive authority).

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternative.