

SGEME 9: IN THE MEAN TIMES...

By Tom Halloran

“In the mean time communications takes a lead role since the value of functional specialization needs to be communicated and understood for its adoption to begin.” Thus David Oyler in SGEME 8. So what follows is an attempt to “communicate” the “value” of functional specialisation.

The paper was written in the context of the 50th anniversary in 2007 of the publication of *Insight* but was focused on Lonergan’s contribution to philosophy and theology. Restricting the notion of contribution to “originality”—perhaps in agreement with Oyler here, Lonergan’s contributions would seem to be functional specialization and circulation analysis—notwithstanding his “achievement” in recovering the contribution of Aristotle and Aquinas by making interiority thematic.

FINALITY, INSIGHT, AND METHOD: MY STAND ON LONERGAN’S CONTRIBUTION TO PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY¹

For some the title of my paper brings to mind “Finality, Love, Marriage”, the title of one of Lonergan’s earlier contributions to theological praxis². More than the title, I want to recall—re-read—that article insofar as the opening sentences intimate the functional specialty, Dialectic³ The first part of my paper is an exercise in functional interpretation bringing to light Lonergan’s stand and stance in 1943.

I will endeavour to follow an analogous⁴ procedure in part two, presenting my stand on Lonergan’s contribution to philosophy and theology—the “theme” for this celebration.⁵ I argue that Lonergan’s contribution to philosophy and theology is contextualised by a differentiated, historical and systematic understanding of these two fields⁶.

¹ This paper differs from the initial abstract, the initial writing, and the actual delivery. It benefits from the context of the Conference of which it was a small part. I take the liberty of referring then to some of the other presenters whose papers are included in this publication.

² Bernard Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage”, in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 4, *Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 17-52. Volume 4 will hereafter be cited as *CWL 4 Collection*. Next July marks the 40th anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*—will there be celebrations of that event? Would “things” be different today, indeed, would *Humane Vitae* have been different if this 1943 contribution and the invitation to collaboration had elicited a collaborative response?

³ See Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1971), 249-250; hereafter *Method*. Other helpful references to what Lonergan means by dialectic can be found at Chapter 17 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 3, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); hereafter *CWL 3 Insight*, and at Chapter 14 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 18, *Phenomenology and Logic: The Boston College Lectures on Mathematical Logic and Existentialism*, ed. Philip J. McShane (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, .2001); hereafter *CWL 18 Phenomenology and Logic*.

⁴ It is an “analogy of proportion”.

⁵ Had we gathered on the “actual” publication day for *Insight*—1st April—the irony of celebrating the 50th anniversary would perhaps be more evident. In 1997—the fortieth anniversary—I bought a pristine copy of *Insight* for a dollar when the Marist brothers sold their library at a secondary school fete. So, quite “politely” we re-call neither the publication nor the success of the book but the contribution of the author and remember his call for collaboration—a re-remembering of the mystical body of Christ.

⁶ The field of philosophy is proportionate being; the field of theology is transcendent being. Though these fields imply differentiated conjugate forms, generalised empirical method embraces both: “...it is quite legitimate to

Finally, I propose that the most adequate celebration of Lonergan's contribution would be to accept the challenge of functional specialisation. Adequate for two reasons: it respects Father Lonergan's incarnate desire for good "non-disciples"⁷; it evokes the "infinite craving" of every human heart and invokes a division of labour that integrates freedom and grace⁸. Absolute finality refers all things to God, the (vertical) finality of functional specialisation intends concrete solidarity in history which Christians conceive as restoring all things in Christ.

FINALITY LOVE MARRIAGE: A "FUNCTIONAL INTERPRETATION"

I have read "Finality, Love, Marriage" many times over many years. In the 70s, I found it "pastorally" helpful in the negotiating the confusion and crisis brought about by *Humanae Vitae*. My proximate context then focused on the "preliminary speculative outline"; in fact, the concern of the article.

Now, however, I attempt a "functional interpretation" of the first two sentences which communicate Lonergan's *stance* in "Finality, Love, Marriage". As illustrating "functional interpretation", I am "interpreting" the so-called "early Lonergan" in the light of my understanding of the so-called "later Lonergan"⁹. So, interpretation is done by the "current Halloran". This interpretation seeks to find "evidence" of the six "operations" which are thematic on pages 249 and 250 of *Method in Theology* and in that context "structure" the functional specialty Dialectic, *qua* functional¹⁰. The operations are named: Assembly, Completion, Comparison, Reduction, Classification, and Selection¹¹

Notwithstanding the correctness of my understanding of "functional interpretation", it is standard scientific procedure to look for evidence of the *thématique* in the *vécu*¹², to look for evidence that

seek in the efficient cause of the science, that is, in the scientist, the reason why a science forms a unified whole. It is at that point that the significance of group theory comes into view." *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 10, *Topics in Education*, ed. Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 160. For further reference to the significance of group theory see "Time and Meaning" in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 6, *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958 – 1964*, ed. Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe, and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 94-121; hereafter *CWL 6 Philosophical and Theological Papers*

⁷ Lonergan did not intend to found a school of "Lonerganians"; and he would not rejoice at such founding. See his remarks about "schools" in *CWL 18 Phenomenology and Logic*.281. I recall Lonergan's *parting words* at the first Lonergan Workshop at Boston College in 1974: "Be good non-disciples".

⁸ On the several ways in which our "infinite craving" can be recovered and restored see page 49 of Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage".

⁹ The "later Crowe"—gentleman scholar, incarnate serious student—remarks in a footnote (somewhere in the *Collected Works*) that perhaps the Crowe of 1974 was not "entirely correct" in referring to Lonergan's "new" notion of value in *Method*. A functional interpretation of Lonergan's writings hands on its findings to the functional historian of Lonergan's intellectual biography.

¹⁰ Dialectic *qua* functional as distinct but not separate from dialectic *qua* existentially spontaneous or even psychologically differentiated.

¹¹ "The structure of dialectic has two levels. On the upper level are the operators. On a lower level are assembled the materials to be operated on ... Before being operated on, the materials have to be *assembled, completed, compared, reduced, classified, selected*." *Method*, 249; emphasis added.

¹² The distinction between *vécu* and *thématique*, between one's living and loving and one's thinking about that living and loving—and indeed one's thinking about that thinking of one's thinking, living and loving—occurs

supports the theory¹³. I am interpreting “Lonergan at work”, seeking evidence of the six operations which some twenty years later he makes thematic. This is not an unreasonable procedure, as both *Insight* and *Method in Theology* are the product of one man and a reflexion on *his own* “practice” over the preceding decades—and those texts “invite” me and you to do the same with regard to our own practice¹⁴.

The text for my¹⁵ “exercise” in “functional interpretation” is the first two sentences.

In the recent fermentation of Catholic thought on the meaning and ends of marriage, the basic component of novelty would seem to be a development in biological science. Quite other factors, no doubt, account for the intense and widespread interest aroused; but the ground of the intellectual problem must be placed, I think, in a new scientific insight¹⁶.

What is *assembled* is the “recent fermentation of Catholic thought on the meaning and ends of marriage.”¹⁷ So Lonergan attends to what has been “fermenting”, bubbling up. The assembly of materials is not restricted to current (1943) “controversies” or “disputed questions” but gives broader historical scope to the meaning of “recent”¹⁸. Performatively—as becomes clear in the main part of the article—the term “Catholic thought” refers to the *field* of the supernatural.¹⁹

Adding “evaluative interpretation and evaluative history”,²⁰ *completion* brings or *anticipates bringing* the fermentation process to the “brew” for some “tasting”. Completion adds evaluation insofar as it “picks out the one hundred and one good things” and their opposites; it can be contrafactual insofar as it remembers things better than what they were²¹. In this context, completion

regularly in the Lonergan *corpus*, but see especially “The Mediation of Christ in Prayer” in *CWL 6 Philosophical and Theological Papers*, 160–182.

¹³ Lonergan attributes the relevance of Piaget’s detailed data on child development to the fact that Piaget had a theory. See “Time and Meaning” in *CWL 6 Philosophical and Theological Papers*, 109; references to the importance of Piaget’s theory for understanding the data are multiple.

¹⁴ This is an issue which is years beyond the context of this paper. The relationship between “interpretation” as normally understood and practiced and “functional interpretation” is complex. For example, Lonergan’s achievement in the *Verbum* articles can be conceived of as “interpretation”; it can also be construed as “functional research”; Dialectic as conceived in Chapter 10 of *Method* transposes Hermeneutics as conceived in Chapter 17 of *Insight*.

¹⁵ But also your own exercise.

¹⁶ *CWL 4 Collection*, 17

¹⁷ The proximate context is that of Doctors Dom and Ford; the more remote context is Catholic thought.

¹⁸ I take “recent” to be co-extensive with Lonergan’s “psychological present” in 1943 as expressed in “the cosmic breadth of a simultaneous context of nature, history, and grace” and detailed in the editorial notes of this article.

¹⁹ Although “written” many years later, in Chapter 10 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*. vol. 10, *Topics in Education*, Lonergan is quite clear in saying that “the supernatural” as understood by Catholics, specifies the *field* of theology.

²⁰ *Method*, 250.

²¹ *Ibid.* In treating of evaluative interpretation and evaluative history, Lonergan alludes to history in the style of Burckhardt rather than Ranke and devotes two chapters in *Method* to the functional specialty, History. To “get” the allusion one must “get at” both of these styles; I have found it helpful to allude to personal history and the place of forgiveness in an ongoing withdrawal from inauthenticity. In this latter context “forgiving the past” does not mean “forgetting” but “remembering differently”.

refers concretely to Leo XIII's "*vetera novis augere et perficere*"—insofar as that maxim provides a holistic view, a pragmatic grasp²² of the universal viewpoint.²³

As is the case with completion, so *comparison* as operative here is similarly less differentiated, more compact. As, I claim, *Aeterni Patris* provided the pragmatic context for "completion" in 1943, so one goes on to "compare" the "positive and doctrinal"—"more important to us as Catholics" with the "analytic and explanatory"—more "relevant to the solution of problems".²⁴

The interplay between completion and comparison as operative in Dialectic as a "functional specialty" remains a complex issue.

Reduction "finds the same affinity and the same opposition manifested in a number of different manners; from the many manifestations it moves to the underlying root".²⁵ The underlying "root"—here "the basic component of novelty"—is "a development in biological science". This is the critical issue, and appropriating the development is the root of the difficulty but also the key to meeting the "intellectual" problem head-on. The key feature of the "reduction" is the recognition and grasp of the "development".

*Classification*²⁶: "Quite other factors, no doubt, account for the intense and widespread interest aroused; but the ground of the intellectual problem must be placed, I think, in a new scientific insight". So the various aspects of the "fermentation" are classified with respect to their affinity with the "root", the development. Further classification seeks to discern whether that relationship to the "root" has its origin in a dialectically opposed horizon or has other grounds.

"*Selection*, finally, picks out the affinities and oppositions grounded in dialectically opposed horizons and dismisses other affinities and oppositions".²⁷ Lonergan's "I think" indicates that he is satisfied that the dialectic function has objectified the field and his horizon so that he can go on, go forward, take a stance with regard to the future, by providing a "preliminary speculative outline [which] aims at no more than a brusque occupation of *strategic theoretical* points on finality, on love, and on marriage."²⁸ These opening sentences indicate that Lonergan is anything but *voraussetzunglos*.

²² As evidence, Lonergan says: "...one can agree with Fr. Ford in desiring the assimilation of new insights into the traditional theoretical framework" ("Finality, Love, Marriage," 18).

²³ Lonergan's notion of *complete* is heuristic and, for that reason, ongoing. Lonergan's notion of complete is far from being simple. See, in this regard, Philip McShane, "Lonergan's Meaning of Complete in the Fifth Canon of Scientific Method," *Journal of Macrodynamical Analysis* 4 (2004): 53-81 available at www.mun.ca/jmda

²⁴ Lonergan, "Finality, Love, Marriage," 18. Lonergan's notion of *comparison* operates proximately within the remote context of the constitutive meaning of *complete* which intends a universal viewpoint. The contemporary practice of "comparison"—comparing X and Y on A—falls far short of what, I believe, Lonergan is intending as a cog in the wheel of dialectic.

²⁵ *Method*, 250

²⁶ "Classification determines which of these sources of affinity or opposition results from dialectically opposed horizons and which have other grounds"

²⁷ *Method*, 250.

²⁸ *CWL 4 Collection*, 18. Italics mine.

The strategic points are the first stage in “a large and long task”²⁹ oriented to “inserting the *vertical tendency* of love from sex to divine charity into the *horizontal process* of fecundity to offspring; and such insertion has to be made on the background of the *general field* of human process”.³⁰ “But as theologians, let alone parents, rarely think of the historical process, it must be noted that we speak not of a *finis operantis* but of a *finis operis* and we do so in its most general terms.”³¹

The fact that such thinking on the part of theologians is rare is a statistical fact. That it happens at all is marvellous for “no one will find a motive in the historical process as such. What moves men and women is some concrete aspect of history”.³² And, I would add, that such concrete aspects of history emerge in the context of a “crisis” in the routines of persons or communities.³³

I do not wish to dwell on the crisis which Lonergan’s invitation to collaborate may have avoided. My sole concern here was to conduct an exercise in “functional interpretation” of two sentences with which Lonergan prefaces his outline but which indicate his stand and his stance. The aim was to find evidence of the six operations which constitute the structure of the functional specialty Dialectic. While evidence here of completion and comparison is circumstantial, it seems reasonable to affirm that these two sentences exemplify what Lonergan means by “functional dialectic”.

MY STAND ON LONERGAN’S CONTRIBUTION TO PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY

Similarities are understood similarly. I express my stand in a similar “format” to what I have “functionally interpreted” as Lonergan’s stand in “Finality, Love, Marriage”.

In the *recent fermentation of catholic praxis on the meaning and redemption of history*, the basic component of novelty would seem to be a *development in methodical collaboration*. Quite other factors, no doubt, account for the intense and widespread interest aroused in so-called Lonergan studies, but the ground of *the existential problem* must be placed, I think, in *one’s judgement of value*³⁴ with respect to functional specialisation.

Some significant *differences* between Lonergan’s stand in 1943 and mine in 2007 need to be indicated to support the analogous nature of the similarity.

“Recent fermentation” is objectively indeterminate; subjectively it is my and your psychological present. So, for example, one might “start” with Vatican II as the locus of “recent fermentation”³⁵ or,

²⁹ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” 18. Recall *CWL 3 Insight*, the Epilogue.

³⁰ Lonergan, “Finality, Love, Marriage,” 18-19. Italics mine.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 47. See Morelli in this volume for the relationship of Hegel’s absolute idealism and historical process.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ With every “crisis” spontaneously we ask: how did we get into this mess? where did things start to go wrong? what was the original sin? The answers to those questions and the evidence that supports the answers provide a context for the solution.

³⁴ Perhaps better expressed as “one’s consent to the value of functional specialisation”.

³⁵ Recall Vatican II and the *assembly* which “*completed*” an evaluative interpretation and evaluative history of the historical movements (biblical, liturgical, patristic). Was there a component of novelty in the deliberations of the Council? Was this and were indeed prior councils operating in the functional specialty of dialectic? How does the notion of dialectic apply to conciliar deliberations down the ages?

with the Reformation, or with modern science as does Butterfield (and Lonergan). Proximate *and remote* contexts orientate one's reading. Indeed the reference to "catholic praxis" and the "meaning and redemption of history" may indicate a plethora of seemingly recent concerns but praxis, the meaning of history, and the redemption of history have been present in the catholic fermentation since the "fullness of time".³⁶

"Development in methodical collaboration" is the basic component of novelty. The moving viewpoint of *Insight* invites the reader to develop—in accord with a spontaneous but historically conditioned³⁷ critical exigence—self-appropriation, self-mediation. The attempt to come to grips with the development of theory and the consequent fact that there are two realms of meaning—two fields—two radically opposed worlds gives rise to the epistemological context of critical philosophy—a *spontaneous* critical exigence³⁸.

In accord with this spontaneous critical exigence one moves into a world of interiority in which the *capacities*³⁹ of human subjectivity are identified, heightened, lightened, and appropriated; one takes possession of oneself as rationally self-conscious, as autonomous, as responsible for oneself. Although the appropriation is a personal achievement, it is historically conditioned by the achievement of those who have gone before in accord with the reach of spontaneous human capacities. In mounting to the level of one's times, one has to move beyond the milk wood of *haute vulgarisation*⁴⁰ to a genuine appreciation of the world of theory.

Every instance of cooperation and collaboration involves evoking spontaneous intersubjectivity to achieve a practical outcome as part of an aggregate and recurrent good of order. In every instance, corresponding to a specific goal there is a commonly understood and accepted set of procedures for collaborating. Methodic collaboration invokes the normativity of human interiority as the procedure for achieving *a cosmopolis*⁴¹ which would reverse the longer cycle of decline. Thus while the

³⁶ Galatians 4:4-6

³⁷ The critical exigence emerges in the historical context of an apparent conflict between common sense and theory to take a stand with regard to objectivity and reality. The complete "stand" emerges in Chapter 17 of *Insight* and faces forward in Chapters 18, 19, 20 calling for an implementation of that stand in the Epilogue.

³⁸ I refer the reader to the contributions of Mark Morelli and Liz Murray in this volume. In their respective approaches, they enlarge the scope of the spontaneous critical exigence to move beyond a solution to the problems of idealist Kantian epistemology and address the issues of Hegel's absolute idealism (Morelli) and the appropriation of rational self-consciousness (Murray). Chapter 18 of *Insight* identifies the possibility of Ethics with the self-appropriation of what Lonergan terms there rational self-consciousness and later terms the existential moment when one decides for oneself what to make of oneself. It remains that freedom is exercised in the company of others; *Insight* "brackets" interpersonal relations and so prescind from the effective exercise of liberty.

³⁹ See *Method*, 48. Although beyond the scope of this paper to present a persuasive argument, I would contend that it is the hierarchy of capacities which determines the scale of preference associated with terminal value; not, as some would suggest, a hierarchy of needs.

⁴⁰ "Haute vulgarisation" acknowledges "both theory and common sense but the acknowledgement of theory is a devalued acknowledgment [because there is] no personal experience of the intellectual pattern of living, of living the way a theorist lives". "Time and Meaning" in *CWL 6 Philosophical and Theological Papers*, 121. In the same volume see "Exegesis and Dogma" at 155.

⁴¹ Many readers of *Insight* have experienced and expressed difficulty in working through the first five chapters. Strategies that would ignore this preliminary work to "fast track" a summary introduction to Lonergan's

achievement in accord with a spontaneous critical exigence opens a third stage of meaning, to go through that opening is to exercise a methodic exigence “returns” to exteriority, to the realms of both common sense and theory. *Method in Theology* pivots⁴² on authentic self-mediation as foundation as “background”⁴³ to provide a doctrine to direct *mutual* self-mediation—one consequence of which is to disavow common sense of its mythic omniscience but draw out the proper orientation of common sense to mystery.

“The existential problem” is the gap between one’s subjective horizon and the objective field. The “existential problem” can be “bracketed” in the natural sciences⁴⁴ but it cannot be avoided in the human sciences among which are philosophy and theology.

“One’s judgment of value with respect to functional specialisation” is the final item of difference. Why a judgement of *value* with respect to functional specialisation? It is possible to find evidence of the nominal specialties in the current products but it is not functional;⁴⁵ there is evidence of collaboration but it is not methodical.⁴⁶ Is there enough evidence to make a judgement of fact about functional specialisation? A judgement of value takes the facts into account —about what is the case—as well as the fact of one’s freedom to “leap” forward towards “what could be the case”. A judgement of value implies “risk”.⁴⁷

In the Epilogue of *Insight*, Lonergan “looks forward”:

If I have written as a humanist, as one dominated by the desire not only to understand but also, through understanding understanding, to reach a grasp of the main lines of all there is to be understood, still the very shape of things as they are has compelled me to end with a question at once too basic and too detailed to admit a brief answer. The self-appropriation of one’s own intellectual and rational self-consciousness begins as cognitional theory, expands into a metaphysics and an ethics, mounts to a conception and an affirmation of God, only to be confronted with a problem of evil that demands the transformation of self-reliant intelligence into an *intellectus quaerens fidem*. Only at the term of that search for faith, for the new and higher collaboration of minds that has God as its author and its guide, could the desired summary and

meaning do so at the expense of an appreciation of theory! Few, however, have failed to *resonate* with the two chapters on Common Sense and, in particular, Lonergan’s depiction of the *malaise* to which a cosmopolis is the heuristic generic solution

⁴² Or “twists” to cut, scissors-like. The upper blade is interiority, the lower blade is the complex of exteriority (theory and practice).

⁴³ The five background chapters of *Method* pivot on Chapter 18 of *Insight*; *Method* begins with the Structure of the Human Good.

⁴⁴ And *perhaps* in the first three functional specialties. Does it emerge in Communications? Or is it “sublated downwards”?

⁴⁵ “Interpretation” is often “functional research”.

⁴⁶ Methodical collaboration specifies the audience as the “next” group of functional specialists in the ongoing eight.

⁴⁷ A judgement of value refers all things to an absolute finality which is unconditional in its worth-while-ness—implying an optimism about the passionateness of being, an eschatology, which would orient a theology of hope; a judgement of value takes the risk that a yet to be realised state of affairs is worth-MY-while in accord with the statistics of the Law of the Cross.

completion be undertaken; and then, I believe, it would prove to be, not some brief appendage to the present work, but the inception of a far larger one.⁴⁸

Metaphysics *implements* the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being. Chapter 18 of *Insight* asks whether Ethics can be conceived in the same way. The *remote* possibility of ethics is grounded in the ontological structure of the good which parallels the method of metaphysics and in the fact of essential freedom, autonomy; the *proximate* possibility is conditioned by effective freedom. Chapter 18 “rounds off” by returning to the questions that emerged in the chapters on common sense, now raised again in the context of the possibility of effective freedom.

In Chapters 19 and 20 further questions evoke a remote context—the remote possibility of a cosmopolis⁴⁹—which is transcendent,⁵⁰ absolutely supernatural.

Method in Theology continues “the inception of the far larger collaboration” by placing the (vertical) finality of *fides quaerens intellectum* into the (horizontal) finality of *intellectus quaerens fidem*.⁵¹ Chapter 18 of *Insight* raises the possibility of ethics in the context of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being as made thematic in metaphysics; Chapter 2 of *Method in Theology* returns to a discussion of the human good and its structure as the first element in the Background and provides the context for the “retrieval” of insight as multi-dimensional, multi-functional meaning in Chapter 3.

But back to the beginning: “theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix”.⁵² Does *religion* intend the same terminal value as a cosmopolis? If so, as mediating between the significance of religion and a given cultural matrix, the role of theology is heuristically practical—a cosmopolis. For Christians, on the one hand theology is *fides quaerens intellectum* and on the other it is “restoring all things in Christ”—not the myth⁵³ of “one hand clapping”!

⁴⁸ *CWL 3 Insight*, 753-754.

⁴⁹ The indefinite article indicates that Cosmopolis is a genus. For example, is Augustine’s City of God a species?

⁵⁰ See however chapter 17 and the discussion of mystery and myth for the cosmic evidence of the remote transcendent context as the fact of further questions.

⁵¹ The terminology is obverse, the meaning is via a “strange twist” (think of the Moebius strip) which is dimensionally obverse. *Insight* moves in accord with the critical exigence which emerges in relation to two types of knowing; *Method* pivots, twists, on interiority as background to pursue foreground methodical exigence which would unite theory and common sense in praxis.

⁵² *Method*, xi.

⁵³ Myth is removed permanently by correct understanding; mystery displaces – cumulatively and cyclically – limited understandings. Vatican I *Dei Filius*—DS 3016.

CELEBRATING LONERGAN'S CONTRIBUTION: OUR STANCE?

I am convinced that functional specialisation is Lonergan's greatest contribution⁵⁴ to philosophy and theology—considered as a complex field. I find little evidence that serious appreciation of that contribution has yet been acknowledged.

The most adequate celebration of Lonergan's contribution would be the implementation of functional specialisation.

“We” must gather again in another fifty or perhaps a hundred years.⁵⁵ The “we” that gathers then will be like the “we” that is gathered now insofar as all stand on the “us” of history, the mystical body of Christ. But whether the “we” then will be better off depends on whether or not “we” now opt for the better way, the more excellent finality, of functional specialisation. The remote audience for theology is the “next” millennium; the proximate audience for the functional specialist theologian is the “next” functional specialty—irrespective of time.

Then, having made a “preferential option for functional specialisation” *now*, we will gather not as “Lonerganians” but as “functional specialists”—good non-disciples of Father Lonergan—to celebrate a cultural change in which “a preferential option for the poor *in spirit*” is more evident...mediating a restoration of all things in Christ.

⁵⁴ Like the 1943 article on which I commented in part one, there are other contributions, other leads, that can be gleaned from Lonergan's writings and self-attentive reflection on what he is *about* in those expressions.

⁵⁵ Fifty years is a very optimistic view. The prevailing wisdom among management gurus is that the “week” not the “day” is the smallest unit of effective “to-do” sheets. Even with the division of labour which functional specialisation facilitates, one has to think in terms of “generations” with regard to cultural change. In the meantime—mean times—we pray to the Father of Jesus for the coming kingdom as well as our daily bread.

