

Lonergan on Presence, Holiness, Beauty

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Presence

The year after Lonergan published *Insight* in 1957, he presented lectures on its topics at St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Later that year, the University of Toronto Press published transcriptions of these lectures as *Understanding and Being*, volume 5 of its Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan¹ In this work, Lonergan presents a reformulation of "consciousness" presented in *Insight*²— no longer as a dimension of "awareness" but now as a dimension of "presence." He gives three meanings to being "present."³

". . . You can say that chairs are present in the room, but you cannot say that chairs are present to the room or that the room is present to the chairs."

A second meaning of *presence* is a presence to someone: "I am present to you, and you are present to me."

A third meaning of presence is a self-presence: "You could not be present to me unless I were somehow present to myself. . . . This third sense of presence is the fundamental presence. But simply as presence it is *empirical consciousness*."

A self-presence is the often overlooked but fundamental meaning of being *conscious*. Being conscious, according to Lonergan, has its own several realms, each arising from a distinct level of the conscious actions by which we open ourselves to reality—what

¹ After transcriptions of tapes of these lectures were completed, they were approved by Lonergan in 1980. Dates of these lectures, the subsequent transcriptions of tapes, and final publication appear in the "Editor's Preface" of *Understanding and Being*, published by the University of Toronto Press in its series, The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, volume 5, 15-17. [Hereafter, references to the Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan will be abbreviated as CWL.]

² See *Insight* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1957) or Philosophical Library, 1970 (320-324) , or CWL 3 (344-348) He makes brief reference to "the addition of speech to presence" in Chap. 17, Sec. 2.4. In 1966, Lonergan published *De Verbo Incarnato* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1966), in which he presented his views on "presence". In 1988, the University of Toronto Press published both the original Latin and an English translation by Charles C. Hefling in CWL 8 (edited by Robert M. Doran and Jeremy D. Wilkins). The relevant texts are found on pages 475, 477, and 502-509.

³ *Understanding and Being, op. cit.*, 15-17. The underlining of "to" is for emphasis; it is not underlined in the original text. Also in 1968, Lonergan comments on his use of "awareness" and "presence". He connects "presence" to an object *intended*, and "awareness" to the subject's *act* of intending. CWL 22, 428.

has been, what is, and what might be. Our consciousness is *inchoate* when we are dreaming in our sleep. It is *empirical* when we are present to the data of experience.⁴ It is *intellectual* when we seek understanding. It is *rational* when, by our judgments, we verify whether certain understandings or plausible explanations rise to the level of established facts. It is a *rational self-presence* when we seek to identify and critique values⁵: a presence that "acquires its ultimate perfection when he [sic] passes from the true to the good, when he wills, takes counsel, deliberates in a moral way, chooses freely, acts responsibly, performs human deeds."⁶

Our rational self-presence, in turn, may also be a *rational* self-consciousness, as when we notice our inner and natural acts of understanding their interconnections, and rationally verify for ourselves whether these interconnected acts reach "objective" truths and/or values.⁷ This *rational* self-consciousness occurs when one "advert[s] to the self-

⁴ The relevant data of experience may be the data of sense or the data of consciousness found in our personal experience or in the experience of others whose word we trust.

⁵ *Understanding and Being*, 16. In this work Lonergan connects wrongdoing to being irrational. It corresponds with his view of "basic sin" as "at the root of the irrational in man's rational self-consciousness." (*Insight*, 1957 edition, 666; CWL 3, 689).

To verify for ourselves that this explanation of "basic sin" can serve as an explanatory conjugate for understanding wrongdoing in any situation, it helps greatly to recall times when we personally acted against our better judgment—times when we avoided doing what we knew we could and should have done, but deliberately avoided doing; and times when we knew things we knew we could and should have avoided, but deliberately did them anyway.

Later, however, in his *Method in Theology* (1972, chap. 4, sec.2), Lonergan identifies "being responsible" as a transcendental notion distinct from "being reasonable": a notion constituted by our questions for deliberation—a conception that does not contradict the irrational nature of sin but sets it in the larger context of being responsible, which includes both an individual responsibility for consistency between one's knowing and doing, and a collective responsibility for undoing or healing the socio-cultural effects of sin where we are able. In short, the range of both individual and collective responsibilities comprise not only deeds done but also deeds not done when the individual or group knowingly could and should have done.

Frederick Crowe observed that a first reference to "being responsible" as a transcendental precept occurs in Lonergan's 1965 article, "*Existenz and Aggiornamento*." See Crowe's "Editorial Notes," pages 255-319 in *Collection*, CWL 4, at 303-08. In 1968, Lonergan named a "fourth level," in which our operations are evaluations, a level of "responsibly deciding," a level of "critical consciousness" that "lifts us beyond the self-transcendence of knowledge and into a self-transcendence of benevolence, beneficence, and genuine loving." See *Early Works on Theological Method I*, CWL 22, 432.

⁶ *The Incarnate Word*, CWL 8, p. 477.

⁷ ". . . a grasp of dynamic structure [of human consciousness] is essential to a grasp of the objectivity of our knowing." From "Cognitive Structure" in *Collection*, CWL 4, at 213. By naming each kind of consciousness, Lonergan is not presenting a logically-ordered set of categories to be "applied" in specific cases; he aims to lead readers to discover the differences in their personal experiences and corresponding differences in what meanings they can derive from their readings.

affirming unity, grasps the different courses of action it can pursue, reflects on their value, utility, or agreeableness, and proceeds to a free and responsible decision"⁸

In Lonergan's 1959 lectures on education at Xavier University, Cincinnati, he links "presence" with the arts and holiness in a way that gives evidence of an expanded insight into how his own artistic sensibilities and personal faith made sense of things he understood. "Art . . . *presents* the beauty, the splendor, the glory, the majesty, the 'plus' that is in things." The "splendor of the world," he adds, "is a cipher, a revelation, an unveiling, the presence of one who is not seen, touched, grasped, put in a genus, distinguished by a difference, yet is *present*."⁹

In 1964, Lonergan published "Cognitive Structure," in which he presented a modified version of the ways we use the word "presence"¹⁰:

A material presence, in which no knowing is involved, such as the presence of a statue in a courtyard.

An intentional presence, in which knowing is involved. There are two quite distinct kinds:

The presence of "an object to a subject"

The presence of "a subject to himself" in which "subjects have to be present to themselves for anything to be present to them"

This modification seems to omit his earlier mention of a mutual presence between two or more persons. This absence may be deliberate, given his remark in *Insight* that "personal relations can be studied adequately only in the larger and more concrete context [of a larger work] and that "the skimpy treatment accorded them in the present work is not to be taken as a denial of their singular importance in human living."¹¹

⁸ *Insight* (Philosophical Library, 1970) 704; also CWL 3, 726. Note that around 1965 Lonergan had reconceived the notion of value—no longer as a "rational self-consciousness" but as the object of responsible consciousness. [See note 5]

⁹ *Topics in Education*, CWL 10, 222. (Aug 1959; The verb *presents* and the adjective *present* are italicized in the autograph.) Lonergan realized, it seems, that touching, grasping, conceptualizing in a genus, and distinguishing by some difference cannot replace the events evoked by some artworks.

¹⁰ "Cognitive Structure," *Collection*, (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1967) Chap. 14, 221-239. CWL 4, 205-221. First published in *Continuum*, vol 2 (1964).

¹¹ *Insight*, CWL 3, 754, n. 1. Lonergan may have conceived an interpersonal/mutual presence as an instance of the "intentional presence" of "an object to a subject." We should note here Lonergan's thought on the absence of God's presence: In his 1968 lecture at Fordham University, entitled, "The Absence of God in Modern Culture," (See *A Second Collection* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1974), 101-116; also *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, 13 (2016), 86-98. He proposed that this absence in modern culture is a fundamental aspect in modern science. While the products of modern science comprise data-based findings, they also influence how people imagine their culture, understood as symbolizing the value

On the other hand, during a presentation at the Thomas More Institute in Montreal in 1975, Lonergan gives a similar view of "presence" that does include a mutual presence between people: "You are present to me, I am present to you, and it is the presence of an object."¹² That is, he envisioned a "presence of an object to a subject" as including objects that are also subjects.

In 1977, Lonergan quotes Eric Voegelin that the divine Sonship of Jesus is "not revealed by information tendered by Jesus, but through a man's response to the full presence in Jesus of the same Unknown God by whose presence he is inchoatively moved in his own existence."¹³

In this perspective, being "unaware" can be understood simply as overlooking some things or some aspects of things. But being "present" is being actively focused on an object of one's intentionality. And the core belief among Christians is that humans desire and need God's active presence in their lives: God gives the innermost divine Word to human history and the innermost divine love in human hearts. It also echoes what Lonergan found valuable in Voegelin's view that belief in the divine Sonship of Jesus stands on a recognition of a "presence" of God in Jesus.

In 1968, Lonergan published "Natural Knowledge of God," in which he observed,

". . . just as we pass from consciousness of the self as subject to an objectification of the self in conceptualizing and judging, so too we pass from intersubjectivity to the objectification of intersubjectivity . . . We speak about ourselves, we act on one another; and inasmuch as we are spoken of or acted on, we are not just subjects, not subject as subjects, but subjects as objects."¹⁴

Moreover, in an earlier article, "Finality, Love, Marriage" (1942), Lonergan had already expanded the possibilities of a presence to oneself to include a mutual presence

of a way of life as a whole. The symbolic meanings of modern science often have displaced the faith-based meanings of religions, so that, by default, the theological and creedal assertions of religions are rendered irrelevant, especially to people who trust modern science more than faith-based theological reflections.

¹² Bernard Lonergan, *3 Lectures*, ed. Eric O'Connor (Montreal: Thomas More Institute for Adult Education, 1975), 40.

¹³ Eric Voegelin, "Gospel and Culture," in *Jesus and Man's Hope*, volume 2, ed., Donald G. Miller and Dikran Y. Hadidian (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1971), 91. Cited by Lonergan in "Theology and Praxis," in *Second Collection*, CWL 10, 186. For Lonergan, the term "presence," seems to have become an explanatory category, and therefore useful for stating Christian doctrines, clarifying their meaning, and communicating God's word in Jesus as interpersonal to people of any culture.

¹⁴ See *A Second Collection* vol. 13 of the *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (eds. Robert Doran and John Dadosky, 2016.), 111-112.

between one's self and loved ones. He recognized a "common consciousness of mutual other selves" based on a union of an habitual and reciprocal love, which is also "an expansion and development of a common conscience."¹⁵ Later, in "Cognitional Structure" (1964) he remarks that "on this level, people both constitute themselves and make their world," adding that on this level people "are responsible, individually, for the lives they lead and, collectively, for the world in which they lead them."¹⁶

In *Method in Theology* (1972)¹⁷, Lonergan alerts his readers that it is "quite difficult to be at home in transcendental method . . . that it involves "heightening one's consciousness by objectifying it, and that is something that each one, ultimately, has to do in himself and for himself."¹⁸

Also in *Method in Theology*, Lonergan had added a fifth transcendental precept, "Be in Love."¹⁹ He did not mean "Be Loving," which would match the syntax of the precepts,

¹⁵ *Theological Studies* 4 (1943), 477-510. Later included in *Collection* (Montreal: Palm Publishers, 1967) 16-53, at page 35. and in CWL 4, 17-52, likewise at page 35.

¹⁶ "It is in this collective responsibility for common or complementary action that resides the principal constituent of the collective subject referred to by 'we,' 'us' 'ourselves,' 'ours.' See Lonergan's "Cognitional Structure," *Collection*, Chapter 14, at 219; CWL 4, 219.

¹⁷ Lonergan intended his *Method in Theology* to be an application of "transcendental method" "a science-based pattern discernable in the human mind and that yields "cumulative and progressive" results (Chapter 1, Section 1). His general focus is not on the theology of any particular religion. However, in Chapter 5, Section 2, he turns his attention to Christianity: "there are abundant materials available in the history of Christian movements of internal and external conflicts. The "utterance and transmission" of the Christian message were the "work of persons bearing witness to Christ Jesus and, by their words and deeds bringing about the present religious situation. Research, then, interpretation, history and dialectic reveal the religious situation. . . . they mediate an encounter with persons witnessing to Christ. They challenge to a decision: in what manner or measure am I to carry the burden of continuity or to risk the initiative of change?"

¹⁸ *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), Chapter 1, Section 3. In this work, Lonergan does not propose a strict difference between "awareness" and "presence." Generally, he associates "awareness" with a subject's act of intending, not with a subject's intended object. Yet in one place at least he also associates *presence* with the object of the act of intending: "Just as operations by their intentionality make objects *present* to the subject, so also by consciousness they make the operating subject *present* to himself." (Chapter 1, Section 1). This apparent inconsistency can be resolved by noticing a commonly-experienced pattern in a *development* of a full religious faith: One first moves from being oblivious to faith, then to an "awareness" of faith, and eventually to a subject's deep and active faith in God's concrete and living interpersonal "presence."

(Note here that by "heightening one's consciousness" Lonergan does not mean focusing more intensely on any object; he means noticing the different quality of awareness as one moves among the levels of being attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and in love.)

¹⁹ Evidence of the beginnings of Lonergan's interest in the "presence" of God appear in his July 1962 seminar on method in theology at Regis College, Toronto: "Life is fundamentally something we know by being alive. . . . Being in love is not simply an act of the will . . . but the total orientation of one's interiority. Similarly, the presence of God is not thinking of an object, but rather the presence of an absence . . . [which,] like all desire, is the presence of what one does not have, and since all desire is ultimately for God, the presence of God is, as it were, the ultimate presence of the absent." Source: "The Human Good, Meaning, and Differentiations of Consciousness," CWL 22, 48.

"Be attentive, Be Intelligent, Be Reasonable, and Be responsible." He meant a higher level of a vertical finality in which a person is concretely "being an agent in society, being in history, in society, in a family."²⁰

Later, in "Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon" (1994) he does treat the realm of "interpersonal relations and total commitment in which humans tend to find the immanent goal of their being and with it their fullest joy and deepest peace."²¹



There is yet a further meaning to the self-presence that occurs in people whose self-presence is also an interpersonal presence of being in love with God. Teresa of Avila wrote this about her experience:

"When picturing Christ . . . and sometimes even when reading, I used unexpectedly to experience a consciousness of the presence of God of such a kind that I could not possibly doubt that he was within me or that I was wholly engulfed in him. This is in no sense a vision: I believe that it is called mystical theology."²²

A Yen for Holiness

A properly grounded theological doctrine may assert God's active presence among humans, but what makes the assertion properly grounded is evidence that this meaning has been historically and individually significant and welcomed, as in Teresa of Avila's experience of God's presence. In the entire Christian tradition, God is trinitarian: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God's active presence is understood as originating in the Father

As far as I can tell, Lonergan's first published mention of "being in love" as a way of being that encompasses both human and divine love appeared in his "Theology and Man's Future," CWL 13, 114-126 at 123. It was first presented at a symposium at Saint Louis University in 1968.

²⁰ Dunne, Tad. "Being in Love" *Method Journal of Lonergan Studies* 13 (1995), 161-175, at 168. The quotation is of the words Lonergan used when, during a personal interview, I asked him what "being in love" meant. By his use of "agent" here clarifies that he understands "being in love," the topmost (fifth) transcendental precept, as more than having loving feelings; it means being an *actively engaged agent* in a love-based community.

²¹ Lonergan, Bernard. "Philosophy and the Religious Phenomenon". *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 12 (1994) 121-46. Also CWL 17, "Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980," 391-408, at 400.

²² *The Life of Teresa of Jesus: The Autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans., ed. E. Allison Peers (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Image Books, 1960). Cited by Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism: Origins to the Fifth Century* (Crossroads, 1997), xiii. In Lonergan's theological categories, this "presence" may be understood as a self-awareness that is simultaneously a "we" awareness with God in Christ.

and becoming part of creation through Jesus of Nazareth in human history and God's self-gift in Holy Spirit of Love in human hearts. Several places in the New Testament define the essence of Christian beliefs.²³ For example:

"When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but will speak only what he hears . . . He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and make it known to you. All that the Father has is mine." (Jn 16:13-15)

"Remain in my love.
I have told you this so that my joy may be in you
and your joy may be complete." (Jn 15:11)²⁴

In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke equates God's "Holy Spirit" with the "Spirit of Jesus", who guides Paul and Silas in their selection of the provinces they should evangelize or avoid. (16:6-7)

Our human sense of insufficiency is likewise a concern of the author of the First Letter of John, who points to God's own love as still incomplete and yet moving toward completion wherever humans love one another:

"This is how God showed his love among us: he sent his only Son into the world that we might have life through him. . . . If God thus loved us, dear friends, we must also love one another. . . . if we love one another, God himself dwells in us; his love is brought to perfection in us." (1 Jn 2:5; also at 4: 9-12).

In a rare and humorous self-revelation, Lonergan remarked that a religious being in love "can be the quiet undertow of one's living that reveals itself only in a deep but obscure conviction that one cannot get out of trying to be holy."²⁵

"Notions" of Holiness

Michael Vertin, in his 1995 article "Judgments of Value in the Later Lonergan," makes an enlightening connection between being in love with God and what Lonergan names the "transcendental precepts" by recognizing how unrestricted love presupposes and "reconstitutes" the transcendental notions as "notions of holiness." Notions of holiness

²³ Scripture texts are included here not as proofs designed to convince the skeptical, but as evidence designed to enrich the believers' understanding of the sources of Christian doctrines.

²⁴ According the author of the Gospel entitled "John," Jesus promises his disciples a share in his own joy, which is surely a joy within the shadow of his immanent death, a joy Jesus promises to his disciples. Chapters 15 and 16 in John are worth contemplating for the sake of understanding the joy that Jesus himself felt in his final hours and desired that his followers feel.

²⁵ "Horizons," CWL 17, 10-29, at 20

comprise "relatively *a priori* dynamic structures that proximately motivate, orient, and norm all my operations of knowing and choosing."²⁶

Our yen for holiness is neither a certitude nor a command; it is a desire, an anticipation, an invitation. God made us out of love, and God made us to be free. So even though each of us is always present *to God*, only *to some of us* is God present —specifically those whose self-awareness is of being a "we" with God, who made them, who preserves, protects, and enriches their lives ("saves"), and whose love for humans comes in a self-gift of the divine Word in human history and divine love in human hearts.

Beauty

As Lonergan intimated in his 1959 lectures on education, our yen for holiness is also a yen for beauty.²⁷ Beauty too is a desire, an anticipation, an invitation, and a gift. Those who experience this beauty and are familiar with the works of Lonergan may notice that their yen for beauty makes their self-transcendence a reality at each level by

- (1) directing their attention to the *possible*;
- (2) symbolizing the *harmony* of order;
- (3) arresting their wonder at the exquisite *uniqueness* of this person, this event, this thing;
- (4) revealing the splendor of *goodness*; and
- (5) liberating them from behind the bars of an independent self-sufficiency to pursue the freedom of an interdependence of *being actively in love*.²⁸

In the perspective of a generalized empirical method, a "notion" or yen for beauty serves an operator function, a "vertical finality" that can integrate and orient the distinct levels of our self-transcendence.

²⁶ *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 13/2 (Fall 1995), 221-248, especially the final two paragraphs. In Vertin's account, the dynamics of notion of holiness may be said to "sublate" the transcendental notions of being attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible and in love. Also, in footnote 8, Vertin locates the "later" Lonergan starting around 1964, when Lonergan shifted his focus from the dynamics of the mind to the dynamics of the heart.

Note: For Lonergan, when speaking of the dynamics of the human spirit, a "notion" is a hunch; it is usually followed by a question; a question which often leads to a satisfying answer. Still, Lonergan stated, "I use the word 'notion' not uniformly but, at times, in a special sense." See CWL17 (*Philosophical and Theological Papers: 1965-1980*), 337.

²⁷ *Topics in Education*, CWL 10, 222. (Aug 1959; The verb *presents* and the adjective *present* are italicized in the autograph.) Lonergan realized, it seems, that touching, grasping, conceptualizing in a genus, and distinguishing by some difference cannot replace the train of events that led to the present inner events evoked by some artworks.

²⁸ Being actively in love is a participation in a higher unity of a "we".

Self-transcendence finds the pinnacle of beauty not in any object one beholds. The pinnacle of beauty appears in what one becomes. In Christian theology, members of communities of those who are actively in love with God and with all whom God loves, belong to a togetherness in God's grace, an objective unity, the Kingdom of God, the Body of Christ. They are the most full realizations of beauty by humans.²⁹

Jesus Remembers

Yet the risen Jesus did not slough his humanity. The risen Jesus remembers according to his human nature. He remembers being brought up and loved by Mary and Joseph, being a friend to Lazarus and Lazarus' sisters Martha, and Mary, being loved by Mary of Magdala and the Beloved Disciple. And while he remembers being suspected by Jewish authorities, doubted by Thomas, abandoned by Peter, and avoided or unknown by most everybody. He remembers his abiding love for prospectively every individual in God's entire family for whose divine life he laid down his own human life.

Practically speaking, people who are present to themselves as being in love with God experience an interpersonal presence with God. They recognize a moving finality, an active driver of their interests, insights, judgments, and commitments by which they seek being fully in love with God, being a "we" with God who created them and all that God loves, being a doer with God of God's works of love. Those who also welcome the gospel message feel an inviting desire to collaborate with God's love by being a co-worker with God in bringing about the promised Kingdom on earth as it exists in heaven.³⁰

Theological Tasks

In the efforts of theologians to bring the Christian message to the world, Lonergan identifies distinct theological specialties. Four specializations retrieve and clarify the past: *research*, *interpretation*, *history*, and *dialectic*.

Research gathers the relevant data. *Interpretation* gives meaning and context to the data. *History* states what was going forward in a community over time. *Dialectic*

²⁹ When a lawyer asked Jesus what the greatest commandment is, Jesus replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your mind, and all your strength. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commandments." (Mk 12: 28-34; Mt 22: 36-40.)

³⁰ "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Luke 11:4). In the accounts by Mark, Matthew, and Luke of the baptism of Jesus by John, Jesus is described as feeling called to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is about to dawn. In the gospel of John, Jesus is presented as the core revelation of the mystery of God's plan for creation—that God's eternal and innermost Word, creator of all things, the embodiment of eternal life, the light of the world — has pitched his tent among us (Jn 1:14).

brings together the views of different researchers, redactors, interpreters, and historians in a dialog that aims (a) to reveal fundamental differences in what they each mean by one's *dramatic imagination*,³¹ by *imagining*, by *knowing*, by *good*, and by *love*, and (b) move toward resolving these fundamental differences through a mutual exposure of horizons that invites those with more narrow horizons to an imaginal-dramatic (psychic), intellectual, moral, and religious conversions.³²

Four further specializations move to the future: *foundations*, *doctrines*, *systematics*, and *communications*.

Foundations of faith are personal achievements. Theologians whose lives are guided by their religious faith identify the fundamental categories for theology in the functional speciality, *foundations*, which lays the footings, as it were, on which theologians build their particular specializations, whether in retrieving the past or moving to the future. The task of moving to the future is taken on by theologians specializing in *doctrines*, in which they formulate the assertions of the truths and values of their religious faith. Theologians specializing in *systematics* seek clarifications and interconnections of the meanings of doctrines. Optimally, they would pursue clarification by linking the category of God's love with a "collective subjectivity" comprising at least a vague awareness and sometimes a clearly known identity between the common consciousness of a community which is part of God's family and God's self-gift. Christian theologians welcome God's self-gift to that community as proclaimed in the Gospel—the long-desired "good news" that God gives the divine self to humanity, both as God's innermost Word in the historical Jesus of Nazareth and innermost Love in the Holy Spirit abiding in human hearts.³³ This good news is formulated for pastoral purposes in the theological specialty *communications*, where theologians creatively adapt various modes of communicating the good news, depending on the media used, the social and cultural differences among prospective recipients, and connections to other forms of human studies.

³¹ To avoid the pitfalls of a faculty psychology, it may be more in line with Lonergan's generalized empirical method to speak of this faculty of one's psyche as a person's active reliance on affect-laden images, or "inner symbols," or "imaginal-dramatic" needs.

³² In his introduction to *Method in Theology* and in Chapter 10, (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972) Lonergan names *dialectic* as a specialization of intelligence that identifies and resolves conflicts in source research, religious traditions, religious authorities, historical accounts, and the writings of theologians.

³³ One may wonder why, among the uncountable ways God might have made us, whatever we earthlings become depends on factors in our history and movements in our hearts. Some may conclude that belief in God as Trinity is a projection of our human condition. Yet it is worth contemplating that we are made like this so that, made in God's own image and likeness, we can welcome the eternal God's self-gift as the divine Word in our history and the divine Spirit of Love in our hearts.

If these theological specializations are to produce any fruit, it should be obvious to hearers/readers of the Christian message that those who lead or teach in a Christian community would manifestly love the community's members. Moreover, an awareness of being in a community of God's innermost Word and Spirit, should be communicated to congregations, students, and retreatants in a way that lifts their awareness of themselves beyond an imagined self-sufficiency toward being intimately related to mutual other selves who are in love with God and aware³⁴ of God as loving them by a self-gift—the gift of God's innermost Word in their history and of God's innermost Love in their hearts.³⁵ They would read or hear the words and deeds of Jesus presented in the New Testament as emerging in Jesus from his own self-presence of being sent by the Father to launch God's Kingdom on earth, and to lovingly give his followers his own Holy Spirit of God's love.³⁶

³⁴ Even though Lonergan reformulated consciousness (in *Insight* as being "aware of" and in *Understanding and Being* as being "present to"), the actual difference between being "aware of" and being "present to" is developmental. See note 18.

³⁵ Frederick Crowe remarked in a class on the Trinity I was taking that just we affirm the mystery of God the Father's Son as one person with two natures, so we can affirm the mystery of God's Holy Spirit of Love as one person in many persons. (During this course, I also realized that what helps us understand God as a trinity is not some definitions of "person" but an understanding the experiences of Jesus' disciples, who understood themselves as being personally engaged by God the "Father" in the person of Jesus the Nazarene and in the Father's and Jesus' own gift of the Spirit of Love to their hearts. In this perspective, "persons" in God are grasped heuristically—whatever there are three of in God's saving and self-giving acts on our behalf.)—metaphysically, a source, a word, a spirit.

³⁶ Most English translations of the Bible refer to John's baptism as a "baptism of repentance." (King James, Douay-Rheims, International Standard, New American Revised, New English Bible), But the word translated as "repentance" (*metanoia*) can also mean something more broad than gaining forgiveness of one's personal sins; it can mean a complete turnaround or conversion in one's self-awareness. A plausible understanding to which the Baptist and the Evangelists testify and which Jesus expected at his baptism is that he came to the Jordan with abiding inspiration to launch the coming Kingdom of God—a mission that would "convert" this would-be carpenter to become a bringer of God's Kingdom on earth: an imaginational-dramatic ("psychic") conversion that drove Jesus into the desert for 40 days (in the pattern of the 40 days that Moses spent without food or drink being with "the Lord," in preparation to reveal God's new covenant to the Israelites); a conversion to confirm his self-presence as being the Father's "chosen one"; a conversion as being the receiver and giver of God's own Holy Spirit of Love, and perhaps also with a premonition that he would shed his own life blood for many as the seal of a new covenant ("This is my blood, the blood of the covenant"—Mt 26:28)—and as the "Suffering Servant" foretold by Isaiah (42:1-4; 49:1-7; 50:4-11 ;52: 1-53). It is a "baptismal" mode of conversion that Jesus manifestly dreaded. See Mt 20:22 and Mark 12:50.



INNERMOST

All you are you offer us.
Innermost your Love you pour into our hearts
to welcome innermost your Word:

your Beauty-Word of creation,
your Love-conceived Word among us,
born of Mary, doer of your works of love,
self-giving unto death, raised by you
to accomplish through us
your works of love in history.

Led not by our fears and hopes but his.

By your Love led to ever cherish your every child.

Tad Dunne
2022