

Chapters 1-4 of *What Is Systematic Theology?*

Preface, pp. 1-2: The book envisions ‘a complete reconstruction of the discipline or functional specialty of systematic theology,’ not by an individual but by a community. The new systematics will be ‘entirely continuous with the permanent achievements of the past,’ achievements, however, that ‘were reached in stages of meaning that are now part of history.’ The ultimate arbiters of meaning are found in ‘interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness ... in the personally appropriated structure of one’s own cognitive and deliberative operations and in the gift of God’s love as one has made that gift one’s own and followed it where it leads one.’

Chapter 1: The book works from the presumption that there is a certain amount of unfinished business in what Lonergan wrote about systematics (3). His notion of systematics remained unchanged throughout his career, but his own development in other areas raises further questions about systematics. For one thing, more will be included among the tasks of systematic theology than he ever explicitly acknowledged. For another, the dynamic of *Method in Theology* currently is interrupted by the chapter on systematics, and I would like to rectify that. ‘More precisely, there are operations that systematic theologians perform that Lonergan does not account for at any point in his presentation of the method of systematics, or for that matter anywhere else’ (4). One result of this effort would be ‘to open the presentation of systematics to the issues of **cultural and religious pluralism and interreligious dialogue**’ (4). 4-5: ‘Perhaps no area of theology in direct discourse is of greater importance at the present time and for the foreseeable future than this, and I am convinced that Lonergan’s own suggestions concerning the direction that Christian theology must take on these issues are still the clearest I have seen and make more sense than any others, even as they are compatible with the best thinking on the part of people who have specialized in this set of questions.’

This is by no means a rejection of Lonergan’s emphases. 5: ‘I insist on the necessity of preserving his distinct emphases.’ ‘I have no quarrel with what Lonergan *does* say about systematics. I am rather noting the absence of certain key elements from his work. I want him to say more. He *can* say more. The “more” is waiting to be said. Clearly, I cannot make him say more, so I will try to say more myself.’

Lonergan’s ‘most detailed single exposition’ of an understanding of systematics is contained in the first chapter of *The Triune God: Systematics*. Much happened between 1957 and 1972, and yet the understanding of systematics remains unchanged. This is the problem I am addressing. *Bring to level of 1972 + then to level of 2005.*

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But I think there are **other functions** that need more development than they have been given.

Chapter 2: Four emphases in particular should be retained from Lonergan's notion, but each of them raises a further question. The four emphases are:

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 (1) The **principal function** of systematics is the hypothetical, imperfect, analogical, obscure, and gradually developing understanding of the mysteries of faith. The *truth* of doctrines pertains to the functional specialty 'doctrines,' where it is affirmed on grounds other than either systematic argumentation or proof and demonstration. The *meaning* of what has already been affirmed as true is the concern of systematics. Thus Lonergan writes (*Method* 336, quoted on p. 8):

Out of the Augustinian, Anselmian, Thomist tradition, despite an intervening heavy overlay of conceptualism, the first Vatican council retrieved the notion of **understanding**. It taught that reason illumined by faith, when it inquires diligently, piously, soberly, can with God's help attain a highly fruitful understanding of the mysteries of faith both from the analogy of what it naturally knows and from the interconnection of the mysteries with one another and with man's last end (DS 3016).

The promotion of such an understanding of the mysteries we conceive to be the principal function of systematics.

The paragraph on 8-9 contrasting Lonergan with Pannenberg should prove helpful here:

Perhaps a clarification by contrast will be helpful. Let us compare this emphasis of Lonergan's with the procedures followed by Wolfhart **Pannenberg** in his *Systematic Theology*. Pannenberg conceives truth as coherence. This is an **idealist** conception of truth entailing a less than adequate distinction between insight and judgment. Within such a conception there is no ground for **distinguishing doctrines from systematics**, for there is **no acknowledgment of judgment as a distinct constitutive element in human knowing**. On Lonergan's account doctrines are correlated with judgment, systematics with understanding. **Doctrines are affirmations. Systematics attempts to understand what has been affirmed**. The affirmations are reached in other ways than by systematic argumentation. On Pannenberg's account doctrines and systematics are one, because on his account judgment and understanding are one; as in all idealisms, they are not adequately distinguished. Thus we have the title of the first chapter of Pannenberg's *Systematic Theology*: 'The Truth of Christian Doctrine as the Theme of Systematic Theology.' On Lonergan's account, again, affirming Christian doctrine as true is one thing, while understanding what one has affirmed to be true is something else. For Lonergan, it is the *meaning* of Christian doctrine, not its truth, that is 'the theme of systematic theology.' It is 'how it *can* be true' that is at stake in systematics. *That* it is true is already affirmed. Or, to be more precise, by the time the theologian begins to do systematics, he or she has already determined precisely what are the doctrines that are to be affirmed. These may or may not be completely coincident with the official doctrines of a particular communion, but the point is that systematics is an attempt on the part of the theologian to state as clearly as possible the meaning of what one has already affirmed to be the case. And at this point, we are concerned

with the principal function of systematics, namely, the understanding of the mysteries of faith affirmed in church doctrines. The truth of doctrine pertains to the functional specialty 'doctrines,' while the meaning of what has already been affirmed as true is the concern of systematics. To affirm certain statements as true and to attempt to understand what these statements mean entail distinct sets of operations. The first set of operations Lonergan calls 'doctrines,' and the second 'systematics.' In Lonergan's words, people 'know what church doctrines are. But they want to know what church doctrines could possibly mean. Their question is the question to be met by systematic theology.'

(2) The systematic theologian does best to take as one's **core problems** those mysteries of faith that have been defined in the church's dogmatic pronouncements. He would single out especially the mysteries of the **Trinity**, the **hypostatic union**, and **grace**. The core meanings that were explicitly affirmed by the Christian church in the kairois moments of its self-constitution are to form the core of that synthetic statement.

(3) Systematic understanding should proceed as much as possible according to the **order of learning and teaching** rather than the order of discovery. Method 345-46: '[T]he course of discovery is roundabout. Subordinate issues are apt to be solved first. Key issues are likely to be overlooked until a great deal has been achieved. Quite distinct from the order of discovery is the order of teaching. For a teacher postpones solutions that presuppose other solutions. He begins with the issues whose solution does not presuppose the solution of other issues.'

The contrast between the two ways can be grasped in the difference between the history of a science and the presentation of the science in a contemporary textbook. 9-10: '... the **history of chemistry** shows that the science established its conclusions by moving step by step toward the understanding of sensible data; but a contemporary textbook begins, not by repeating these experiments and so going through the whole history of discovery, but with the periodic table of chemical elements from which over 300,000 compounds can be derived.' **The way of analysis or discovery led to the formulation of the periodic table, while the way of teaching begins from the periodic table and proceeds to compose from it the various compounds that it allows us to understand.** '... a teacher starts with those notions the understanding of which does not presuppose the understanding of anything else but rather makes possible the understanding, in the limit, of everything else in the science.' **Compare Augustine and Aquinas on the Trinity.**

The comparison with chemistry thus leads to the question, What will stand to systematic theology as the periodic table stands to chemistry? 'Answering that question will enable us to proceed in the *ordo doctrinae* that is appropriate to systematics.' Chapter 7 will address the question.

The way of discovery is the way of the first six functional specialties.

This third emphasis is immediately qualified by the admission that most systematic efforts employ also the way of discovery, since there is a history to systematics, and very seldom is a position reached where the sum of the questions is equal to the sum of the resources available to answer them. There is a systematics *in fieri* and occasionally a systematics *in facto esse*. The latter will be the work of a **community**.

There is also a set of movements from particular sets of systematic achievements to further, more complete sets. 10: 'Most systematic efforts ... are part of systematics *in fieri*, and every systematics *in facto esse* is destined to be replaced by new syntheses, as questions arise that cannot be treated adequately within the framework provided by the old system.' 10-11:

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In Lonergan's words, the principal 'question to be met by systematic theology' is 'what church doctrines could possibly mean,' and 'the answer to that question is a gradual increase of understanding. A clue is spotted that throws some light on the matter in hand. But that partial light gives rise to further questions, the further questions to still further answers. The illuminated area keeps expanding for some time but eventually still further questions begin to yield diminishing returns. The vein of ore seems played out. But successive thinkers may tackle the whole matter over again. Each may make a notable contribution. Eventually perhaps there arrives on the scene a master capable of envisaging all the issues and of treating them in their proper order.' Yet, as Lonergan makes clear especially in his 1959 course 'De intellectu et methodo,' **even such a synthesis will be gone beyond** as yet further questions emerge, questions that in many instances could not even have been asked had not the systematic synthesis been achieved. The questions are raised within the framework of a particular systematic achievement, and yet they cannot be answered within the confines of that same framework. In the work of one who presents such a synthesis, systematic theology would follow the *ordo doctrinae*, in a manner analogous to the way in which a chemistry textbook composes the compounds from the periodic table. But in the work that leads up to and makes possible such a synthesis *and* in the work that follows once the synthesis that once satisfied now proves inadequate to respond to later questions, both ways of ordering ideas are employed. The *ordo doctrinae* remains the systematic ideal, of course. But it is crucial that the theologian acknowledge which of these two 'ways' he or she is working in at any given point. And when it becomes clear that a particular systematic framework is too narrow to handle the further questions that arise within it, then holding fast to the *ordo doctrinae* of that systematic framework is, at best, a logical-deductivist mistake and, at worst, obscurantist rejection of those further questions. The move has to be made to the systematics *in fieri* that employs the *ordo inventionis*, until there is reached the new vantage point that will account for and respond to the new questions. The irreversible 'upper blade,' the source of all permanent achievements, lies in the dynamism of the minds that raise the further questions. Permanent achievements, both doctrinal and theological, have been reached along the way, but the only arbiter of such achievements lies in the authenticity that acknowledges them.

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(4) Systematics is to be, as much as possible, **explanation** on the level of one's own time. First, it is to be explanation, not description. Here the example is the use of technical terms such as procession, relation, person in Thomist trinitarian theory. These terms (*Method* 346, quoted 12) 'have a highly technical meaning. They stand to terms as they occur in scriptural or patristic writings much as in modern physics the terms, mass and temperature, stand to the adjectives, heavy and cold.'

But the contemporary context of the move to explanation demands that one root one's categories in **interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness**, and that theology **share with other contemporary disciplines some categories**, even while purifying the meaning and use of those categories where necessary. This will bring us back to the chapter on **Foundations**. But the key quotation is the following from *Method* 343:

[T]he basic terms and relations of systematic theology will be not metaphysical, as in medieval theology, but psychological ... General basic terms name conscious and intentional operations. General basic relations name elements in the dynamic structure linking operations and generating states. Special basic terms name God's gift of his love and Christian witness. Derived terms and relations name the objects known in operations and correlative to states ... For every term and relation there will exist a corresponding element in intentional consciousness.

Obviously, then, systematics must employ both the **general categories** that theology shares with other disciplines and the special categories proper to theology itself. 12: 'The base of the general categories is the **interiorly differentiated consciousness** promoted by Lonergan's intentionality analysis; Lonergan indicates that his earlier work *Insight* shows how the general categories are derived. The base of the special categories is the **religiously differentiated consciousness** that would be promoted by an exploration of religious love and a differentiation of the spiritual life.

And on the lack of '**special basic relations**' in this quotation see my footnote 14, p. 209.

The section ends with the remark that this insistence on explanation is qualified, of course, by the reminder that it does not mean moving from causes of being to causes of knowing, as in science (cf. the phases of the moon). In God there are no causes of being. The essential move is rather from causes of knowing that are more evident with respect to us (the way of discovery) to causes of knowing that are more evident with respect to themselves (the way of teaching).

The chapter moves next to **questions about each emphasis**.

(1) If the principal function of systematics is clear, **what are the other functions**, how are they related to the principal function, and how are they related to the other functional specialties?

(2) While the core problems are set by the dogmas that express some of the revealed mysteries, still there are also **aspects of revealed mystery that have not received dogmatic status**. How are these to be related in systematics to the dogmatic elements?

(3) **What precisely is the relation of the *via inventionis* components to the *ordo doctrinae* within systematics itself?** These components, obviously, entail work in the first six functional specialties. When the *via inventionis* operations are performed by a *systematic* theologian in service of systematic understanding, they have a finality other than the one that is proper to the given functional specialty in which such work is being done. What are the dynamics operative when one is engaging in one functional specialty in order to meet the demands of another functional specialty? How does one guarantee

that one's integrity in these other functional specialties is not compromised by one's ulterior objective?

(4) If the aim is explanation, what is one to make of **aesthetic, dramatic, narrative theologies**? Can they be **explanatory**? How does one move from description to explanation with regard to such expressions of meaning? Is an **explanatory employment of symbolic categories** possible, and if so what are its grounds? Thus (15):

At this point we are moving in the area addressed by Hans Urs von Balthasar's theological aesthetics and dramatics. But we are attempting to relate the positive gains of these works to Lonergan's systematics while complementing each of them by the other. If Balthasar speaks of 'theological dramatic theory,' we must inquire into his meaning of the word 'theory.' If its explanatory potential remains under-emphasized in Balthasar's work, as I think it does, then we must ask how it can be developed. It is an important emphasis that should be promoted, not reversed, and yet it will not be promoted *for systematics* unless a move can be made from description to explanation. To give a concrete illustration, the second volume of Balthasar's *Theo-drama* is concerned with precisely the same problem that Lonergan addresses in his study of Aquinas on *Grace and Freedom*, namely, the interrelationship of divine and human freedom. The categories in which the problem is expressed are remarkably different: Balthasar's are dramatic, while Lonergan's are metaphysical. The problem yet to be answered is just how the two treatments are related to one another.

On the other hand, are there not some elements of the mysteries of faith than can never be expressed in technical language? E.g., redemption. If so, can we arrive at an understanding of redemption that is more than descriptive? **Is an explanatory account of symbolic, dramatic categories possible in systematic theology**, as a way of talking about the mysteries of faith? Thus (15-16):

Lonergan is very clear in *Insight* that explanatory understanding of non-explanatory meanings is possible. At least once in his discussion of modern psychologies he stated that the depth psychologies of Freud and Jung were seeking precisely this kind of understanding; as contrasted with other psychologies, at least the depth psychologies were in pursuit of explanatory understanding. But to my knowledge he never shifted these hermeneutical affirmations into a theological context so as to face the question, Is an explanatory employment of symbolic, dramatic categories possible *in systematic theology*, as a way of talking about the mysteries of faith? And if it is, what are its grounds? In fact, in the introductory chapter of the *pars systematica* of *De Deo trino*, the contribution even of depth psychology to the transcultural problem is still regarded as descriptive. The most difficult point for some Lonergan students to grasp in what I have written about symbols and psychic conversion is my insistence that **it is possible to attain an explanatory understanding of symbolic meaning, an understanding that relates the symbols to one another**. This emphasis can be extended to narrative, so that it is possible to have an explanatory grasp of narrative. But that is still a hermeneutic affirmation, even if it bears principally upon the interpretation of the reality of the self. My present questions are such questions as the following: Can that possibility be carried

over into systematic theology? If it can be, **is it desirable to do so, or should systematics under all circumstances seek to move to technical language?** If it is possible and desirable to pursue an explanatory use of symbolic categories or of narrative, how would one begin to ground this use?

Chapter 3: Dogma and Mystery.

This is the **first point** I make by way of expanding on Lonergan's emphases: the relation between dogmas and the mysteries of faith.

Vatican I correlates **dogmas with mysteries**, doctrines that express a mystery so hidden in God that we could not know it at all had it not been revealed. See note 1, p. 211. This leads me to a **twofold differentiation**. **First**, among the church's doctrines some express mysteries of faith and some do not. **Second**, among those that express mysteries of faith, some have received dogmatic status and some have not. Systematic theology is organized around the subset called dogmas, a subset, twice removed, of the more basic category 'church doctrines.' 17: 'However much systematic theology will attempt also to understand doctrines that are not dogmas, whether they be ecclesial or theological doctrines or both, and even to propose new theological doctrines, some of which may some day become church doctrines, at its core lies the attempt to present a synthetic understanding of the mysteries that have been expressed in the dogmatic judgments of the church.'

To illustrate this, that systematics attempts a synthetic understanding of those mysteries that have received dogmatic status, I appeal to the **four-point hypothesis** that plays an important part in my thinking, since **it is for me part of what will stand to systematics as the periodic table stands to chemistry**. But for now I'm appealing to it only to show how systematics does this synthetic work on the dogmas, that a systematic theology can be organized around a synthetic statement of dogmatic materials, in this case Trinity, incarnation, grace, and the last things. See p. 18.

But systematic theology is more than an understanding of dogmas. It is (19) '**the ordered, coherent, hypothetical, gradually developing, structured, synthetic, and in places analogical and obscure understanding, in the limit, of all the realities intended in the meanings actually or ideally constitutive of the community that is the church.**' There are elements of mystery that extend beyond dogma; and dogma does not take away the mystery of what it defines. 19: '... mysteries extend far beyond what has been clarified or perhaps ever will be expressed in dogmatic statements, and this in at least two ways. First, there are elements of Christian constitutive meaning, and indeed of the mysteries of faith in the strict sense of "mysteries," that have not received, and perhaps never will receive, dogmatic status. Second, and just as important, the element of mystery is a permanent feature even of those elements of Christian constitutive meaning that have received such status in the church, no matter how clear their conceptual formulation will be.'

The issue, then, is one of mystery. While dogma defines mysteries of faith, the mysteries of faith extend beyond what has been or will be formulated in dogmatic pronouncements, and systematic understanding must include these mysteries as well as those that have been dogmatically affirmed. 20: ‘What are the grounds that will enable systematic theology to remain in touch with the mystery that it is attempting to stutter about (however systematic the stuttering may be)? What are the grounds that will prevent systematic theologians from entering again the vast arid wasteland of theological controversy over inconsequential issues? What are the grounds that will prevent both systematic theologians and church teachers from neglecting the proclamation of the mysteries in favour of focusing on issues that are not central to the gospel?’

21: What grounds the synthetic inclusion in systematic theology of elements of the Christian mystery that have not been and perhaps never will be formulated in dogmatic pronouncements?

In the case of the redemption, for example, we are dealing with a mystery of faith that has not received, and perhaps, even cannot receive the kind of clarification that the technical terms of Nicea and Chalcedon brought to the incarnation. We are perhaps dealing with **permanently elemental meaning**, meaning that will always be better expressed in the **symbolic, aesthetic, and/or dramatic terms** of scripture, literature, and drama, than formulated in technical language. 22: Permanently elemental meaning would be **meaning that remains permanently just like that of an experiential pattern that does not intend something else that is meant, or like that of a symbol whose meaning has its proper context in the process of internal communication in which it occurs and not in some subsequent interpretation.** The meaning will always have one dimension more than any technical formulation is capable of articulating.

Still, if these elements are to be included in systematic theology, we need to seek for some **explanatory** grasp of the narrative itself, where its inner constituents are related not just to us but to one another. The explanatory employment of symbols would enable one to grasp in their relations to one another first the symbolic meanings and through those meanings the elements of the drama that are affirmed precisely by employing these symbols (24). If, as Lonergan himself admits in speaking of the Marian dogmas, the grounds of systematic understanding at times have to do with **the refinement of human feelings, with the emergence of a Christian religious sensibility, with the aesthetic and dramatic constitution of Christian living**, then perhaps there is a dimension to theological foundations that Lonergan did not expressly articulate. We are pushed back to **‘the grounds of systematic understanding’** (24). 24-25: ‘If those grounds at times have to do with “the refinement of human feelings,” with the emergence of a Christian religious *sensibility*, with the aesthetic and dramatic constitution of Christian living, then there is perhaps a dimension to theological foundations that Lonergan did not expressly articulate. It is the dimension that I have attempted to indicate in my various attempts to speak of a **“psychic conversion.”**’

Related questions are: do all derived categories have to be **metaphysical**? Again, where are the **analogies** to be found? Can some be aesthetic and dramatic? Systematic theology

remains technical discourse, but the question becomes, Whence the analogies that will render technical discourse possible when the meanings remain elemental? For Balthasar, the theological **criterion for passing judgment on a metaphysics** is aesthetic. Again, for him some of the mysteries of faith will demand that some of the categories employed in systematics be drawn from **dramatic and aesthetic** theory. I agree, but I add that perhaps Lonergan's emphasis on **explanation** remains valid even in this realm of elemental meaning. All of this is summed up in the last four paragraphs of the chapter, introducing the notion of an **aesthetic-dramatic operator** (26-27). Quoting:

If that is the case, then what is at stake here is what we must regard as an expansion of the **normative source of meaning** beyond what is generally regarded as Lonergan's view on the issue. In fact, something of an expansion of his own usual view can be found in Lonergan's own later writings, and especially in the wonderful paper 'Natural Right and Historical-Mindedness.' This expanded normative source of meaning will enable us to answer the questions, How is mystery preserved in systematic theology? and What are the grounds that will enable systematic theology to remain in touch with the mystery that it is attempting to speak of?

In 'Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,' then, Lonergan states that there is a *normative* source of meaning in history, as well as a total and dialectical source. The normative source is **twofold**. It consists, first, of the **operators** of conscious intentionality: questions for intelligence, questions for reflection, questions for deliberation. These operators are what would usually be considered Lonergan's normative source of meaning. But in 'Natural Right and Historical Mindedness' these several principles of integrity and authenticity are 'but aspects of a deeper and more comprehensive principle,' and it is this deeper and more comprehensive principle that is the normative source: 'a tidal movement that begins before consciousness, unfolds through sensitivity, intelligence, rational reflection, responsible deliberation, only to find its rest beyond all of these,' in 'being-in-love.' This tidal movement is an ongoing process of self-transcendence that in another paper from roughly the same post-*Method* period, 'Mission and the Spirit,' is called 'the passionateness of being.'

The tidal movement or, again, the passionateness of being has a **dimension all its own**, distinct from but intimately related to the operators and operations of intentional consciousness, a dimension that underpins, accompanies, and reaches beyond the operations of intelligent, rational, and responsible intentionality. As underpinning intentional consciousness, the passionateness of being is an operator that presides over the transition from the neural to the psychic, the unconscious to the conscious. As accompanying intentional consciousness it is the mass and momentum, the colour and tone and power of feeling. As reaching beyond or overarching intentional consciousness it is the operator of community.

My own addition, perhaps, to what Lonergan says consists in the affirmation that in its totality this tidal movement is **a series of operators that I will call aesthetic-dramatic**. These join with the intentional operators (questions for intelligence, questions for reflection, and questions for deliberation) to yield the normative source of meaning in history. Furthermore, what I call psychic conversion establishes the link, through a turning of intentional consciousness to its aesthetic-dramatic counterpart. It is from the ongoing clarification and appropriation of the aesthetic-

dramatic operators that **the explanatory use of aesthetic and dramatic categories will be possible in systematic theology**. It is psychic conversion that will keep systematic theology in touch with the mystery that it is attempting to understand.

And at the beginning of chapter 4 I state that these elemental meanings are **closest to the form of divine revelation itself**.

Chapter 4. Theological Doctrines.

There are also doctrines, both ecclesial and theological, that do not directly express mysteries of faith but that systematic theologians attempt to work into a synthetic construction. This chapter is especially concerned with **theological doctrines** that one receives from the tradition or from one's contemporaries, or in some cases that one develops on one's own. **These doctrines themselves often have systematic implications, and when that happens elements of other systematic syntheses are part of the doctrinal inventory of a systematic theologian.**

In fact no systematic theology begins *simply* and solely from the mysteries of faith; every systematic theology stands within a history of attempts to understand the Christian faith. 30: When one begins to operate in systematics, one has already made **decisions**, not only regarding the core dogmatic elements constitutive of the church, but also regarding the theological **tradition** within which one stands. Moreover, every systematic theology is in dialogue with other contemporary efforts to understand the same faith and the same traditions. Systematic theology is inescapably intertextual ...'

These past and present theologies exhibit genuine achievements of understanding that, once they have been accepted and affirmed as such by a systematic theologian, assume for that theologian a certain doctrinal status, the status judged to have passed the tests required if they are to be affirmed by a theologian. This is not the status of a church doctrine, much less of a church dogma. The *judgment* that affirms them is what makes of them theological doctrines. In sum (31), 'The general movement of Lonergan's method itself, ... as it proceeds from dialectic through foundations to doctrines and systematics, and especially as it does so over and over again, comes to demand the inclusion of certain theological doctrines among the affirmations that systematics would understand.

Theology itself provides some of the doctrines that contemporary systematic efforts attempt to understand. This element is often overlooked in the interpretation of what Lonergan means by the 'doctrines' of his sixth functional specialty. Yet, as we have seen, it is clear from Lonergan's own text that this is what he meant. And so we must grant something of a doctrinal status to the systematic framework in which these theological doctrines were expressed.'

For instance, on p. 32 I locate myself within 'the tradition of Aquinas as this tradition has been made available through the interpretations of Lonergan and advanced by Lonergan's developments and transpositions of some of its essential inspirations.' This means that 'basic formal-methodological *and doctrinal* components have already been determined, and the affirmation of such components includes content beyond both the mysteries of

faith themselves and other church doctrines. Nor is that determination arbitrary: one has considered as best one can the multiple options (dialectic) and discerned as best one can the ground for the determination (foundations).’ Moreover, ‘The doctrines of such a theologian include some of the achievements arrived at in the tradition that one affirms, and so in the previous attempts of other systematic theologians within that tradition to *understand* the mysteries of faith.’

I suggest **three sets of criteria** that must be satisfied for something to be considered a theological doctrine: (1) a theological position is judged to have brought definitive **closure** to a particular theological debate; (2) a particular analogy seems to be the only **analogy** of nature yet discovered and developed that is useful for understanding a particular divine mystery; (3) a position is an inescapable **practical** conclusion of the gospel.

If I judge that a theological position has brought **closure** to a theological debate, then that achievement has assumed a certain doctrinal status for me precisely as systematic theologian, irrespective of whether it ever attains doctrinal status in the church. The example I give is the theological doctrine on **operative and cooperative grace**, both habitual and actual, that Aquinas expresses in the *Prima secundae* and precisely as Lonergan has interpreted it. The debates (post-Aquinas) that this interpretation settles render them simply matters for the first phase; they do not need to be revisited in an effort to settle them, if the judgment is true that the theological doctrine appealed to has settled them. If one agrees, then one has a doctrine. It is not church doctrine. It is not church dogma. But it is more than a systematic hypothesis or at least it functions in one’s own theology as more than a systematic hypothesis. 33: ‘If one regards those debates as over, if one judges that Lonergan’s interpretation of Aquinas has brought closure to the *de auxiliis* controversy (a closure that pronounces a plague on both houses), then that judgment is among the affirmed doctrines that in systematics one would attempt to understand. It may have taken one a number of trips through the loop or spiral of the functional specialties to arrive at the point where one has a theological doctrine of one’s own on these issues. But once one has reached that point, the relevant affirmations are doctrinal, not in the sense of assent to scriptural doctrine or to church doctrine or to dogma, but in the sense of **assent to a particular theological achievement**. They are doctrinal, not in the sense of providing an element of the church’s constitutive meaning, but in the sense of being **a probable approximation to the correct understanding of that meaning**. The achievement is, of course, also judged not to run counter to scriptural doctrine or to church dogma or to other church doctrines. But it is not, as such, included among these forms of doctrine, nor is it likely that it will ever be granted the status of church doctrine. Yet by being affirmed as a genuine theological achievement, it is constituted among the elements that, as a systematic theologian, one would attempt to understand.’

A second reason for granting a systematic achievement the status of a theological doctrine is that one judges that the achievement provides the best or perhaps the only **analogy** from nature for understanding a supernatural mystery. It is on this basis that I opt for the psychological analogy for understanding the trinitarian processions. I indicate

three firmly established moments in the history of the analogy (33) and suggest a fourth in the later Lonergan; and I have begun to attempt a fifth. In every instance, the structure of the analogy remains the same. What differs is the starting point. What is the best analogical starting point for a conception of the divine Father? Lonergan's later position is expressed on p. 34 and again on pp. 36-37, and my lecture offers a development on this position. But the structure remains the same. On p 38, I raise the question of why the analogy has not been understood. **First**, there is not an awareness of insight, especially as grounding inner words; there are philosophical as well as existential and psychic biases against acknowledging insight. **Second**, there is a resistance against making the move to theory. **Third**, there is a resistance against making the move to interiority. **Fourth**, the heart of the difficulty is that 'the psychological analogy puts the subject himself or herself at stake, and it calls for a conversion' (38). The precise mode of intelligible emanation that is used has to do with the subject's self-constitution.

At least for me, a third criterion is one of praxis, the praxis consequences of the gospel. The example of a theological doctrine that satisfies this criterion is the doctrine of the preferential option for the poor.