Class 12
Sections 5 and 6 of chapter 9 of *What Is Systematic Theology?* and chapter 12 of *Method in Theology*

Section 5 of Chapter 9: Expanding the Notion of Psychic Conversion

Section 5 of the chapter goes into far more detail then we will have time for to suggest that psychic conversion enables not only a connection with von Balthasar but also a rapprochement with Heidegger and Wittgenstein. The basic idea is that of an expansion of the notion of the first or empirical level of consciousness through the notion of 'reception from above.' 125: 'Included among the data that occur to the attentive subject of a consciousness that is also invested with exigencies to be intelligent, reasonable, and responsible, and that is meant for love, are not only … the spontaneous, immediate data of sense and consciousness. Nor are the materials limited to those data along with the symbolic and dramatic-aesthetic operators, including feelings … Included as well are the materials that are intended in von Balthasar's "seeing the form," in Heidegger's preconceptual grasp of temporal, historical facticity, of what Heidegger, perhaps misleadingly, calls *Sein,* and in Wittgenstein's insistence on the public meaningfulness of ordinary language.' We receive *empirically* the intelligibility, truth, and value of communally sedimented meaning. 'Reception "from below" has to do with the data of sense and consciousness that are the straightforward object of "empirical consciousness" in the ordinary sense of the term. But reception "from above" has to do with the meanings and values that are handed on to us in our communities. In each case there is an immediacy about the reception that qualifies it as "empirical consciousness." 128: There are presentations that occur empirically to the conscious subject that are already infused with intelligence and rationality and, we may add, with ethical overtones. In this section, I spend a great deal of energy and time finding evidence for this notion in Lonergan himself. That we will have to skip. See, e.g., the schema on p. 128. Recall also the statement of Lonergan's differentiating the data of the natural sciences, the data of the human sciences, and the data of theology.

Chapter 12 of *Method in Theology*: 'Doctrines'

1 The Varieties of Doctrines

> **Question 1: How do the doctrines meant in chapter 12 differ from the four other varieties of doctrines that Lonergan discusses in the first section of the chapter? RD lecture.**

The chapter is rather loosely organized. We have to realize that Lonergan is doing two things in this chapter. First, he is specifying the precise meaning of the term 'doctrines' **as a functional specialty**. And second, he is discoursing in general on **the complexity of the category 'doctrines.'** The first section, on the varieties of doctrines, **both** isolates the peculiar meaning of doctrines as a functional specialty and witnesses to the complexity of the category.

So, the varieties of doctrines: **First**, there are the **primary sources**, where a distinction is drawn between **the doctrine of the original message** and **doctrines about this doctrine**.

From scripture and biblical interpretation we gain the doctrines of the **original** apostolic preaching, and doctrines about these doctrines. As Lonergan says in Paul there are references to the original message in 1 Corinthians 15.3 ff. and Galatians 1.6 ff.: 'I passed on to you what I received, which is of the greatest importance: that Christ died for our sins, as written in the Scriptures; that he was buried, and was raised to life on the third day, as written in the Scriptures; that he appeared to Peter, and then to all twelve apostles. Then he appeared to more than five hundred of his followers at once, most of whom are still alive, although some have died. Then he appeared to James, and then to all the apostles' (1 Cor 15.3-7). Galatians 1.6 ff. basically claims there is no other gospel than the one Paul preached to them.

Stages in the proclamation and application of this message yield **doctrines about doctrine**. Hebrews 1.1, 2 ('God spoke to us of old through his prophets and most recently in his Son'). Acts 1.28 recalls how a decision of assembled Christians coincides with the decision of the Holy Spirit. There is a development of a **sense of apostolic tradition** in such figures as Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen, who all appeal to the teaching given by the apostles to the churches they founded. There is the **fixing of the canon** and of certain **hermeneutical principles** especially by Clement of Alexandria.

Second, there are **church doctrines**. From history we gather the church doctrines that arose as explicit answers to questions raised at another time. They are **not simple reaffirmations** of scripture and apostolic tradition.

Third, there are the **theological doctrines** of the various periods and schools in Christian history: the theological doctrines of the Fathers, of the medievals, of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation theologians, of modern and even contemporary theologians – these are theological doctrines as **studied in history**.

Fourth, history reveals a **methodological** problem, one that surfaced toward the end of the thirteenth century and continued through the succeeding centuries, one that, in Lonergan's view demanded an answer to the three questions, What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? What do I know when I do that? And also an answer to the question, What am I doing when I am doing theology? Here the answer 'must envisage not only the Christian encounter with God but also the historicity of Christian witness, the diversity of human cultures, the differentiations of human consciousness' (297). There emerges a **methodological doctrine** (i.e., Lonergan's) that in dialectic finds that the serious oppositions among these various doctrines are rooted in the presence and absence of the conversions, and that in foundations formulates a position regarding the conversions.

Finally, there are **the doctrines meant in this chapter, namely, (church and) theological doctrines that are selected from dialectic on the basis of foundations**. To the extent possible, the contemporary theologian speaking in direct discourse will either state what he or she holds to be true (judgment) in categories derived from conversion and interior and religious

differentiation, or at least will appeal to these bases to state what the doctrines selected from dialectic really mean – e.g., Lonergan's work with the 'consubstantial' of Nicea.

RD: In the functional specialty Doctrines, then, we use foundations (1) to *select* from the multiple choices presented by dialectic the doctrines, scriptural and ecclesial and theological, that will be *our* affirmations as theologians speaking in our own right, i.e., to mediate the tradition into the present, (2) to *transpose* those doctrines into categories derived from the bases employed in foundations and into communications that will reach the varied mentalities to whom the church preaches the gospel, i.e., to mediate between a cultural matrix and the significance of a religion within that matrix, and (3) at times to *propose* new theological doctrines in response to the exigencies of the contemporary situation, i.e., to contribute to the ongoing tradition.

Despite this being the doctrines referred to in the title of the chapter, much of the chapter has to do with the transposition of church and theological doctrines from one context to another.

The functional specialty 'Doctrines,' then is a second-phase set of operations, and as such it extends **far beyond repeating church doctrines or even the theological doctrines of others**. It *selects*, grounded in foundations, and *affirms* those doctrines **as *one's own***. It transposes into the contemporary context. And it proposes possible theological positions that themselves may or may not become church doctrine at some date in the future.

2 Functions

Question 2: In addition to the functions common to all meaning, doctrines exercise a normative function. How do they exercise all these functions: cognitive, effective, constitutive, communicative, and normative? What gives doctrines their normativeness? Again, RD lecture.

Doctrines in general – any kind of doctrines – fulfill the communicative, effective, constitutive and cognitive functions of meaning. 298: 'It [doctrine] is **effective** inasmuch as it counsels and dissuades, commands and prohibits. It is **cognitive** inasmuch as it tells whence we come, whither we go, how we get there. It is **constitutive** of the individual inasmuch as the doctrine is a set of meanings and values that inform his living, his knowing, his doing. It is **constitutive** of the community, for community exists inasmuch as there is a commonly accepted set of meanings and values shared by people in contact with one another. Finally, it is **communicative** for it has passed from Christ to the apostles and from the apostles to their successors and from these in each age to the flocks of which they were the pastors.'

Doctrines are **correlated with judgment**, which is a full act of meaning with a full term, declared to be true independently of the judging subject. Judgment entails a personal responsibility over and above understanding and thinking, the personal commitment involved in saying, 'This is the case.'

Anything regarded as a doctrine fulfils the four functions of meaning. Take **for instance** the affirmation: 'The divine Word, the Son sent by the Father, is incarnate in the human being Jesus of Nazareth.' This is proposed as a theological statement that purports to say what the church

believes. It is **cognitive**: it proposes to say something true. It is **effective**: it has an effect on our lives if we take it seriously. It is **constitutive**: what I hold to be true informs my living, knowing, doing; and what the community holds to be true constitutes the community through commonly accepted meanings and values. Finally, it has a **communicative** function: by stating it I intend to communicate a meaning that I hope will pass into the mentality of others who hear me or read what I have written, thus contributing to community and history.

But what makes doctrines doctrines is that the community holds them to be **normative** (or, in the case of theological doctrines, that a theologian holds them to be true). De facto, positions granted a doctrinal status in the community or in theology are invested by that community or that theology with normativity. But for Lonergan, **genuine normativity** flows from intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, and so **the de facto normative doctrines of the community should be coincident with the normative doctrines that would follow from conversion**. This is the serious business of the theologian: the normativeness of authenticity. Theological doctrines are what the theologian judges to be the normatively constitutive meanings of the religion that theology will mediate with culture. For Lonergan these should first be **transposed** into or articulated in categories of interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness. Then they can undergo **further transposition in communications** into the immediate context of the particular situation. In fact, the last four functional specialties are regarded as a series of ever more concrete transpositions. I refer you here back to p. 142:

> As the first phase rises from the almost endless multiplicity of data first to an interpretative, then to a narrative, and then to a dialectical unity, the second phase descends from the unity of a grounding horizon towards the almost endlessly varied sensibilities, mentalities, interests, and tastes of mankind.
>
> This descent is, not properly a deduction, but rather a succession of transpositions to ever more determinate contexts. Foundations provides a basic orientation. This orientation, when applied to the conflicts of dialectic and to the ambiguities of history, becomes a principle of selection of doctrines. But doctrines tend to be regarded as mere verbal formulae, unless their ultimate meaning is worked out and their possible coherence revealed by systematics. Nor is such ultimate clarification enough. It fixes the substance of what there is to be communicated. But there remains both the problem of creative use of the available media and the task of finding the appropriate approach and procedure to convey the message to people of different classes and cultures.

Doctrines, then, have a normative function, and **particularly the doctrines meant in this chapter**. '… doctrines, based on conversion, are opposed to the aberrations that result from the lack of conversion.' This normative character **pertains to this functional specialty**, as a normativeness **resulting from a determinate method**. The **method** gives the normative character, one that is **distinct** from that attributed to the opinions of theologians because of their personal eminence or because of the high esteem in which they are held in the church or among its officials. The normativeness of any theological conclusion is **distinct** from and dependent on the normativeness attributed to revelation, scripture, or church doctrine. The theologian proposing theological doctrines will want them to be harmonious with revelation, scripture, and church doctrine, but also will want them to be accepted as the best theological expression of the latter sources and their meaning.

3 Variations

Question 3: Section 3, Variations, begins to speak of a legitimate form of doctrinal pluralism, though the term is not yet used. What is the source of such a legitimate pluralism?

There are variations that have taken place in the **expression** of Christian doctrines, where the introduction of Christian truth into a culture is based on the creative use of the resources of that culture, and where the development of doctrine in that culture will continue to exploit those resources. These variations are simply a function of **cultural differences**. The gospel is to be preached to all, but not in the same manner to all. Those who preach it have to use the resources of the culture being addressed, and to use them creatively. Doctrines will also be developed within the culture and on the basis of its resources. **300**: '… down the ages there have developed the idiosyncracies of local and national churches. Nor do such ongoing differences, once they are understood and explained, threaten the unity of faith. Rather they testify to its vitality.' Doctrines named dogmas will be claimed to be permanent, but not on classicist grounds. What is substantial and common to human nature is the quite open structure of the human spirit operative through fidelity to the unexpressed transcendental precepts. But within these parameters human concepts and courses of action are products and expressions of acts of understanding, understanding develops over time, such development is cumulative, and each cumulative development responds to the human and environmental conditions of its place and time. This is the source of a legitimate pluralism of doctrinal expression.

Later, Lonergan will emphasize as well that there will be further variations developed as one mediates the gospel to a culture that itself is in process of development. 317: There has been going forward 'a series of fundamental changes that have come about in the last four centuries and a half. They modify [our] image of [ourselves] in [our] world, [our] science and [our] conceptions of science, [our] history and [our] conception of history, [our] philosophy and [our] conception of philosophy. They involve three basic differentiations of consciousness [modern scientific, scholarly, and interior], and all three are quite beyond the horizon of ancient Greece and medieval Europe.' These variations as well do not destroy the permanence of truth nor deny something common. But they do force theology to acknowledge that *what is common is the open structure of the human spirit, giving rise to new contexts that demand transpositions even of true statements from former contexts.*

Thus we need not fear transposition and variation, as long as they are congruent with the foundational conversions. A historically conscious method not only tolerates but also promotes a certain doctrinal pluralism. But it also **roots the unity of faith** in the universally shared open structure of the human spirit and the gift of grace, thus deriving its categories from that foundation.

4 Differentiations of Consciousness and 5 The Ongoing Discovery of Mind: Part One

Question 4: The basis of Lonergan's answer to the question of how we can develop what we would not even know unless God had revealed it is found in differentiations of consciousness. How does Lonergan argue this through section 5 of the chapter? RD lecture.

The basis of Lonergan's answer to the question of how we can develop what we would not even know unless God had revealed it is found in differentiations of consciousness. More precisely, on p. 319, he refers to his treatment of 'the ongoing discovery of mind' as disclosing 'one cluster of manners in which doctrines develop.' **Actually, doctrines develop in many ways**. In addition to the **differentiation** of consciousness, there is the **dialectical** source of some development, in which the truth is discovered because a contrary error has been asserted. 319: '… the intelligibility proper to developing doctrines is the intelligibility immanent in historical process. One knows it, not by a priori theorizing, but by a posteriori research, interpretation, history, dialectic, and the decision of foundations … It is not in some vacuum of pure spirit but under concrete historical conditions and circumstances that developments occur, and a knowledge of such conditions and circumstances is not irrelevant in the evaluational history that decides on the legitimacy of developments.' Finally, he refers to the **cultic** development of the Marian dogmas and suggests that the refinement of feelings is the area to be explored in coming to understand their development.

In **section 4**, he simply reviews a good deal of material that for the most part has already been treated, **listing the differentiations**: common sense, transcendence, system, post-systematic literature, method, scholarship, post-scientific and post-scholarly literature, interiority: a 'bare list' (305). But in **section 5** he goes on to show how this is **one way of accounting for the development of doctrine** or one aspect in understanding such development. 305: '… these differentiations … characterize successive stages in cultural development and … this series contributes not a little to an understanding of the development of doctrines, for doctrines have meaning within contexts, **the ongoing discovery of mind changes the contexts**, and so, if the doctrines are to retain their meaning within the new contexts, they have to be recast.' On this basis Lonergan considers the following changing contexts: (1) the reinterpretation of symbolic apprehension, (2) philosophic purification of biblical anthropomorphism, (3) the occasional use of systematic meaning, (4) systematic theological doctrine, (5) church doctrine dependent on systematic theological doctrine, and later (6) the complexities of contemporary development. The first 5 of these are treated in section 5.

(1) The reinterpretation of symbolic apprehension (306-307): The OT writers used the traditions of neighboring peoples to provide themselves with the possibility of expressing something quite different. Similarly in the NT there occurred symbolic representations taken from late Judaism and Hellenistic Gnosticism, but in a manner that kept them subordinate to Christian purposes.

Regarding OT: The OT writers (306-307) 'could use the traditions of neighboring peoples to provide themselves with the possibility of expression. But what they expressed was something quite different. The God of Israel played his role in a very real human history. Questions about creation and the last day were concerned with the beginning and the end of the story. There was no mention of a primeval battle of the gods, of a divine beginning either of kings or of an elected people, no cult of the stars or of human sexuality, no sacralizing of the fruitfulness of nature.'

Regarding NT (307): '… there did occur the use of symbolic representations also found in late Judaism and in Hellenistic Gnosticism. But these representations were used in a manner that kept them subordinate to Christian purposes and, when such subordination was lacking, they were submitted to the sharpest criticism and rejection.'

(2) Philosophic purification of biblical anthropomorphism (307): As Xenophanes began an effort to conceive God, not on the analogy of matter but on that of spirit, so Clement of Alexandria bade Christians to abstain from anthropomorphic conceptions of God even though they were to be found in scripture.

(3) The occasional use of systematic meaning: this began in the Greek councils. E.g, 'consubstantiality,' which simply means that what is true of the Father also is true of the Son, except that the Son is not the Father; Chalcedon's use of person and nature to express simply that it is one and the same Son our Lord Jesus Christ that is perfect in divinity and the same perfect in humanity, truly God and the same truly man, consubstantial with the Father in his divinity and the same consubstantial with us in his humanity.

(4) Systematic theological doctrine: a fully metaphysical context for interpreting the dogmas emerges in the context of Scholasticism, which was a thorough-going effort to attain a coherent and orderly assimilation of the Christian tradition. 309: 'Terms were defined. Problems were solved. What had been lived and spoken of in one way now became the object of reflex thought that reorganized, correlated, explained.' Examples are provided regarding sacraments and grace. The problematic side of this development is treated on 310-11. Aristotle has been superseded. He did not anticipate either the emergence of a method that envisaged an ongoing succession of systems or the emergence of a form of scholarship that would make its aim the historical reconstruction of the constructions of humankind.

(5) Church doctrine dependent on systematic theological doctrine: 311-12: 'Church doctrines and theological doctrines pertain to different contexts. Church doctrines are the content of the church's witness to Christ; they express the set of meanings and values that inform individual and collective Christian living. Theological doctrines are part of an academic discipline, concerned to know and understand the Christian tradition and to further its development. As the two contexts are directed to quite distinct ends, so too they are unequal in extent. Theologians raise many questions that are not mentioned in church doctrines. Again, theologians may differ from one another though they belong to the same church. In Catholic circles, finally, the relations of theological schools to one another and to church doctrines is a carefully mapped terrain. What are called theological notes and ecclesiastical censures not only distinguish matters of faith and theological opinions but also indicate a whole spectrum of intermediate positions.

'… from the middle ages right up to Vatican II the doctrines of the Catholic Church have been deriving from theology a precision, a conciseness, and an organization that in earlier times they did not possess. In general, the meaning of these doctrines is not systematic but, commonly, it is post-systematic.'

Was this influence legitimate? That is for the theologian to determine. But the methodologist can point out the different contexts in which such questions about development arise: the pre-historical-mindedness context of anachronism and archaism; the various theories of development; and **Lonergan's option**: 'there can be many kinds of developments and … to know them, one has to study and analyze concrete historical

processes while, to know their legitimacy, one has to turn to evaluational history and assign them their place in the dialectic of the presence and absence of intellectual, moral, and religions conversion.'

6 Ongoing Contexts

Section 6 treats the notion of ongoing context as it pertains to both church and theological doctrines. That contexts are ongoing means that **earlier pronouncements are understood in the light of further developments**. 313: 'Ongoing context arises when a succession of texts express the mind of a single historical community. Such an ongoing context necessitates a distinction between prior and subsequent context. Thus a statement may intend to deal with one issue and to prescind from other, further issues. But settling one does not burke the others. Usually it contributes to a clearer grasp of the others and to a more urgent pressure for their solution.' Thus from Nicea to Third Constantinople (313) there is evidenced an ongoing context that did not exist prior to Nicea but came into existence subsequently to Nicea, stating what resulted from Nicea and what became in fact the context within which Nicea was to be understood.

That is the **ongoing context of church doctrines**. But it also gives rise to an **ongoing context of theological doctrines**. It presupposes the church doctrines and asks, 'Could Christ as man sin? Did he feel concupiscence? Was he in any way ignorant? Did he have sanctifying grace? To what extent? Did he have immediate knowledge of God? Did he know everything pertaining to his mission? Did he have freedom of choice?' This theological context expanded in the medieval schools to envisage the whole of scripture and tradition, embraced mutually opposed schools of thought, came to distinguish between opposition in theological doctrine and opposition in church doctrine, agreed it was OK to differ on the former but not on the latter. The two contexts interacted: theologians were under the influence of church doctrines, while without the theologians the church doctrines would not have had their post-systematic precision, conciseness, and organization.

Thus in **church doctrines**, Nicea came to be understood within the later context, some four centuries later, of a fuller position on the ontological constitution of Christ. And this fuller position in church doctrine gave rise and gives rise **today** to a distinct context of theological questions that have never been formulated as church doctrines but that have been formulated as theological doctrines: e.g., on the consciousness and knowledge of Christ: consider Lonergan's proposal of one subject with two subjectivities, and ask whether that opens the door to greater clarification.

7 The Ongoing Discovery of Mind: Part Two

Section 7 goes back to the list of changing contexts presented in section 5 and takes up the last topic listed there: **the complexities of contemporary development**. Contemporary developments are forcing **a new context of theological doctrines**, one that accepts the modern notions of science, history, and interiority. There was a **'unified world view'** (compare the notion of a unified field structure) that resulted from the medieval decision to use Aristotle, but unified world views change. The *nova* are listed: the shift from a classical to a modern notion of science, the shift from humanistic eloquence as the aim of scholarship to the reconstruction of

the constructions of humankind, the shift from a logical-deductivist notion of philosophy to one based on the turn to interiority. 'The general science is, first, cognitional theory …, secondly, epistemology …, and thirdly metaphysics.' Later he adds 'existential ethics.' He traces the history of the shift to interiority from Descartes to Kant and Hegel, and then from Kierkegaard to the existentialists. And then he writes, 'I have been indicating in summary fashion a series of fundamental changes that have come about in the last four centuries and a half. They modify man's image of himself in his world, his science and his conception of science, his history and his conception of history, his philosophy and his conception of philosophy. They involve **three basic differentiations of consciousness**, and all three are quite beyond the horizon of ancient Greece and medieval Europe.' The three differentiations are modern science, scholarship, and interiority. They were **marked by a lack of intellectual conversion**, and so led to positions that were inimical to the church and to theology. They call for (318) 'a philosophic and theological method, and such an explicit method has to include a critique both of the method of science and of the method of scholarship.'

The material of section 8 was mentioned earlier, in treating development and ongoing contexts.

Section 9 The Permanence of Dogmas

It is only in the context of the problem of guiding development that the issue of permanence can be raised. Among the church doctrines that interact with theological contexts, some are taught as **dogmas**. For Lonergan, a position can qualify as a dogma if it expresses **a mystery that could not be known unless it were revealed by God**. Lonergan's position is that some doctrines are dogmas in this sense, and they must be invested with some kind of **permanence**. He bases his position on what qualifies as dogma on an exegesis of the text of *Dei Filius*.

In this section he provides an exegesis of *Dei Filius*, the document of Vatican I that dealt with this issue. The document affirms a **permanence of meaning, and it states that the permanent meaning is the meaning declared by the church in the context of the original declaration; that is the meaning which the church understood and understands**. The permanent meaning is the meaning of dogmas, and the dogmas are here understood as the church's declarations of revealed mysteries, of what cannot be known at all were it not revealed. **The permanence attaches to the meaning, not to the formula**. To retain the same formula and give it a new meaning is excluded. And it is better to speak of permanence than of immutability, for there is desired an ever better understanding of the same dogma, the same meaning, the same pronouncement.

Section 10 The Historicity of Dogmas

Vatican I did not attempt to deal with the underlying issue of the historicity of dogma, an issue that has come into prominence only since. So the issue arises: **Can the permanence of the meaning of dogmas affirmed by Vatican I be reconciled with the historicity that characterizes human thought and action?**

What is meant by the **historicity** of human thought and action? It means: (1) human concepts, theories, affirmations, courses of action are expressions of human understanding, (2) human

understanding develops over time, and as it develops human concepts, theories, affirmations, courses of action change, (3) such change is cumulative, and (4) the cumulative changes in one place or time are not to be expected to coincide with those in another.

To this account must be added the difference between the fuller understanding of data and the fuller understanding of a truth. This will recur in the chapter on Systematics. 325: 'When data are more fully understood, there result the emergence of a new theory and the rejection of previous theories ... But **when a truth is more fully understood, it is still the same truth that is being understood.**' And **the dogmas are permanent in their meaning because they are not just data but expressions of truths, in fact of truths that, were they not revealed by God, could not be known by us**. Once they are revealed and believed, they can be better and better understood, but that ever better understanding is of the revealed truth and not of something else.

This is not opposed to the **historicity of the dogmas**. 325-26: 'Truths can be revealed in one culture and preached in another. They may be revealed in the styles and fashions of one differentiation of consciousness, defined by the church in the style and fashion of another differentiation, and understood by theologians in a third. **What permanently is true is the meaning of the dogma in the context in which it was defined**. To ascertain that meaning there have to be employed the resources of research, interpretation, history, dialectic. To state that meaning today one proceeds through foundations, doctrines, and systematics to communications. Communications finally are to each class in each culture and to each of the various differentiations of consciousness. **The permanence of the dogmas, then, results from the fact that they express revealed mysteries. Their historicity, on the other hand, results from the facts that (1) statements have meanings only in their contexts and (2) contexts are ongoing and ongoing contexts are multiple.'**

What is opposed to the historicity of the dogmas is not their permanence, but classicist assumptions and achievements, where culture is assumed to be normative, one, universal, and permanent.

Section 11: Pluralism and the Unity of Faith

Lonergan distinguishes **three sources of pluralism**: (1) the different brands of common sense, (2) the various differentiations of consciousness, and (3) the intellectual and moral and religious conversion in all of their stages of development. He also distinguishes **two ways in which the unity of faith may be conceived**: classicist, where the unity of faith is a matter of everyone subscribing to the correct formulae, and a historically minded unity, where the real root and ground of unity is being in love with God, the acceptance of the gift of God's love as religious conversion leading to moral and even intellectual conversion. If religious conversion is Christian, it contains an interpersonal component, both with God and between human beings, where Christian witness testifies to God's revelation. **The function of church doctrines lies within the function of Christian witness**. 327: 'The meaning of such declarations lies beyond the vicissitudes of human historical process. But the contexts within which such meaning is grasped, and so the manner in which such meaning is expressed, vary both with cultural differences and with the measure in which human consciousness is differentiated.' Even in the past there has existed a notable pluralism of expression, and today there is quietly disappearing the old

classicist insistence on worldwide uniformity and there is emerging a pluralism of manners in which Christian meaning and Christian values are communicated. 328: 'To preach the gospel to all nations is to preach it to every class in every culture in the manner that accords with the assimilative powers of that class and culture.' Such preaching will have to be as multiform as are the brands of common sense and the differentiations of consciousness. 329: 'Preaching the gospel to all means preaching it in the manner appropriate to each of the varieties of partial attainment [of differentiation] and no less to full attainment.' The church needs to become all thing to all people, communicating what God has revealed in the manner appropriate to the various differentiations and in the manner appropriate to each of the brands of common sense. This involves '*no more than a pluralism of communications*' of the same faith. **The real menace to the unity of faith does not lie either in the many brands of common sense or the many differentiations of human consciousness but in the absence of intellectual or moral or religious conversion, whether in those that govern the church and teach in its name, or as we make the transition from classicist to modern culture, or as we insist that our partial differentiations are complete.**

Section 12: The Autonomy of Theology

The section **argues against the view that a theologian is just to be a parrot with nothing to do but repeat what has already been said**. Theology is not, of course, a source of revelation nor an addition to inspired scripture nor, directly, an authority that teaches church doctrine. But theologians treat many matters that church doctrines do not treat, and they have been the first to propound theological doctrines that provided the background and some part of the content of subsequent church doctrines. The theologian has a contribution of his or her own to make, and so possess some autonomy. **The context of theology is different from that of church doctrine. Church doctrine is the sum of the church's witness to Christ accumulated through the ages, while theology has the task of furthering the development of that tradition by mediating the church's witness with a contemporary cultural matrix.** The criterion to guide one in the exercise of one's autonomy is the criterion of authenticity rooted in the conversions. The responsibilities are serious, and the method rooted in the conversions is far from foolproof, but for Lonergan it is the best we have, and we must be willing to risk relying on it.

To repeat what we have seen from *What Is Systematic Theology?* I suggest three criteria that may be appealed to by a theologian who would elevate a certain theological position to the status of a theological doctrine: (1) it brings a conflict to a conclusion, (2) it provides the best analogy for a particular mystery, (3) it represents an inescapable ethical consequence of the gospel.

There is a certain flexibility to Lonergan's notion of 'Doctrines' as a functional specialty that was not found in the older notion of dogmatic theology. The difference is primarily one of mentality. 333: '**Dogmatic theology** … tends to take it for granted that on each issue there is one and only one true proposition. It is out to determine which are the unique propositions that are true. In contrast, **doctrinal theology is historically-minded**. It knows that the meaning of a proposition becomes determinate only within a context. It knows that contexts vary with varying brands of common sense, with the evolution of cultures, with the differentiations of human consciousness, and with the presence or absence of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion.' RD adds: It will transpose church and theological doctrines from other contexts into a contemporary context. It regards that transposition not as a betrayal but as the best means of

preserving and developing the meaning that was once formulated in a different way in a different context. **What is key for doctrinal theology is permanence of meaning, not necessarily of formulation**. And it will develop the new theological doctrines demanded in the contemporary context: doctrines that may influence the future formation of church doctrines.

Regarding **transposition**, earlier in the book Lonergan had spoken of the last four functional specialties as a series of ever more concrete transpositions, 'a succession of transpositions to ever more determinate contexts' (142). That is, '… the second phase descends from the unity of a grounding horizon towards the almost endlessly varied sensibilities, mentalities, interests, and traste of mankind.' As it does so, the doctrines selected from dialectic are first transposed into the categories of interiority and religious differentiation, then their ultimate meaning is worked out and their coherence revealed by systematics, and finally the message is conveyed to people of different mentalities and cultures. This is **not so much a linear process as a back-and-forth one**.

A clear example would be (1) transposition the Thomist relation of sanctifying grace and charity into a relation of receiving divine love and loving in return; foundations and doctrines; (2) understanding how this either provides us with, or is related to, a Trinitarian doctrine, a Christological doctrine, an eschatological doctrine; systematics; (3) finding ways to communicate the gift of God's love and its meaning and implications; communications.