

## **Essays in Systematic Theology 18: Ignatian Themes in the Thought of Bernard Lonergan<sup>1</sup>**

What I hope to do in this essay is twofold. First, I have selected some themes and currents in Bernard Lonergan's work that have correspondences in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius and that may very well be Ignatian in inspiration, and second, I have identified in Lonergan himself a language, a contemporary idiom, that I believe helps us understand what Ignatius himself is up to. So I will try to identify a movement, a dynamism, from Ignatius to Lonergan, and then in Lonergan a set of contributions to the clarification and development of the Ignatian charism in the Church. These two tasks do not divide the sections of the paper. There are four sections, and these two tasks are present in all of them.

I begin with the Ignatian ethos of Lonergan's first great book, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. 'Ethos' is a deliberately vague and indeterminate word that will become more determinate, I hope, in the course of this discussion. I am not talking about any references to Ignatius, any direct and clear applications of elements from the *Exercises*, or anything else of that sort. There is nothing like that in *Insight*. I am talking about an atmosphere, a tonality, a spirit, a dynamism. From there I will move to Lonergan's contribution to clarifying three Ignatian themes: the times of election, discernment, and consolation without a cause. In the discussion of these Ignatian themes as they appear in Lonergan's writings, there will emerge one further Ignatian characteristic of Lonergan's work, namely, the place of the Trinity at the heart of Lonergan's world view. And from that Trinitarian mysticism I will move to and conclude with some suggestions regarding the Ignatian rules for thinking with the church.

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## 1 The Ignatian Ethos of *Insight*: An Experience of Consolation

Two fellow Jesuits have remarked to me, quite independently of one another, that their experience on concluding each chapter of *Insight* was an experience of what St Ignatius calls consolation. St Ignatius writes about spiritual consolation:

I call it consolation when there is excited in the soul some interior motion by which it begins to be inflamed with the love of its Creator and Lord, and when, consequently, it can love no created thing on the face of the earth itself, but only in the Creator of them all. Likewise, when it sheds tears, moving it to the love of its Lord, whether it be from grief for its sins, or from the Passion of Christ our Lord, or from other things directly ordained to His service and praise. Finally, I call consolation every increase of hope, faith, and charity, and all interior joy, which calls and attracts man to heavenly things, and to the salvation of his own soul, rendering it quiet and tranquil in its Creator and Lord.<sup>2</sup>

Now what would the consolation be that these two people attested to?

While it is probably true that some people have been reduced to tears when reading *Insight*, this is not the experience of consolation that at least some people have attested to. That experience is closer to the first and last instances of consolation that St Ignatius speaks about: it is an increase of an interior joy, of hope, faith, and charity, and a love of God and of all else *in* God. This consolation is related to an illumination that *Insight* can effect: in fact this world *is* intelligible, things *do* hold together, we *can* make sense of the universe and of our lives, we *can* overcome the fragmentation of knowledge, we *can* make true judgments, we *can* make good decisions, we *can* transcend ourselves to

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<sup>2</sup> *The Text of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, trans. With a preface by Henry Keane, S.J. (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1952) §316.

what is and what is good. And *Insight* brings us to this illumination not by constructing some new universal narrative or all-embracing theory but by helping us come to know ourselves, to know the dynamic structure that integrates our operations of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. There is something about this conviction, this illumination, that is more than just intellectual satisfaction. There was for these Jesuits the sense that this is a philosophic worldview that is completely harmonious with their Ignatian heritage. As Hans Urs von Balthasar said about Aquinas's metaphysics, this philosophy too is completely harmonious with the biblical revelation of the glory of God.<sup>3</sup> That is the reason for the consolation. *Insight's* scientific, sociopolitical, cognitional-theoretic, epistemological, metaphysical, and ethical positions are completely harmonious with the biblical revelation of the glory of God. Even though there is no treatment of anything that directly has to do with the biblical revelation of the glory of God until the final two chapters and the epilogue, still the book is written by a person who, while he is working 'from below upwards,' as it were, in the advance of a moving viewpoint, is from the beginning in love, with the love that this same person would later emphasize is *God's own love for God and for everything else in God*. He writes from that

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3 'The metaphysics of Thomas is ... the philosophical reflection of the free glory of the living God of the Bible and in this way the interior completion of ancient (and thus human) philosophy. It is a celebration of the reality of the real, of that all-embracing mystery of being which surpasses the powers of human thought, a mystery pregnant with the very mystery of God, a mystery in which creatures have access to participation in the reality of God, a mystery which in its nothingness and non-subsistence is shot through with the light of the freedom of the creative principle of unfathomable love.' Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 4: *The Realm of Metaphysics in Antiquity*, ed. John Riches (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989) 406-407.

stance. He is taken up in that from the beginning, and it shines through on every page. That is why readers of the book equipped to understand what Lonergan is saying can put the book down after each chapter with something remarkably like what St Ignatius calls consolation, that is to say, with an interior joy, with an increase in hope, faith, and charity, with the conviction that this book is *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam*, for the greater glory of God, with a love for all things *in* their Creator and Lord.

Perhaps nowhere is this consolation more the experience of many readers in the strictly philosophical portion of the book, that is, prior to any introduction of the question of God, than in the remarkable chapter 12, 'The Notion of Being.' The chapter says the following: Being is everything about everything. Being is what would be known in the totality of true judgments. Being is everything that can be intelligently grasped and reasonably affirmed. Apart from being there is nothing. Being is completely concrete and completely universal. Being is incrementally known in every true judgment, but a true judgment is reached precisely as a true judgment only when one knows there are no further questions on a particular issue. So, the chapter implies without explicitly saying it, being is also a task. Reaching being in any concrete instance calls for a cognitive integrity or authenticity that cannot be taken for granted either in oneself or in others. Thus the chapter offers a set of clues to a philosophic discrimination of truth and illusion, of the real and the unreal, of the true and the false, a discrimination that is anything but automatic. It can entail a prolonged struggle. The struggle is felt in the soul of the reader, in feelings that are truly spiritual in their source, their meaning, and their implications. The feeling of the discrimination can be the feeling of a battle in which what is at stake is the very integrity of the reader's intellectual life. There is an existential crisis (not just a cognitive problem) that is entailed in arriving at the three basic philosophical positions of the book *Insight* – the positions on knowing, on the real as being, and on objectivity.

I wish to suggest that in its spiritual tonality or 'taste' this crisis is a philosophic instantiation of the decisive struggle that St Ignatius portrays in his meditation on the

Two Standards. As one making that meditation is to pray for knowledge of the deceits that would lead one astray and for knowledge of the true life that Christ points out, so the reader of chapters 11, 12, and 13 of *Insight* is engaged in the existential discrimination of the waywardness of human cognitional process and the painful discovery that what counts cognitively is not what is exciting, not what is expressed with the most clever rhetorical flourish, not what wins the attraction of the popular magazines, not what equips a professor of philosophy or theology to be a weekend celebrity – not riches, honor, pride – but the impalpable and in no way extravagant act in which one knows one can say in an inner word of assent, ‘It is,’ ‘This is the case,’ ‘No further questions on this issue.’ In the words of the Gospel, ‘Let your speech be “Yes, Yes,” and “No, No.” Anything else is from the evil one’ (Matthew 7.37). Often one does not reach this very quiet and intimately private act until one has engaged some or all of the attractions that would pull one in a different direction. There is something akin in Lonergan to the Buddhist struggle between truth and illusion. And that struggle is spiritually akin to Ignatius’s struggle between, on the one hand, riches, honor, and pride, and on the other hand poverty, the welcoming of the world’s reproaches and contempt, and humility. And all of these are akin to a ceasing from some great striving, a detachment and disinterestedness, an indifference in the deeply committed Ignatian sense of that term. And in more contemporary Girardian terms, all of these are akin to the truthful and humble relinquishment of rivalry and violence, to the converted acceptance of the Johannine Logos in whom all things were made, the Logos that in coming into the world was rejected, the Logos that in being rejected put an end to all violence, the Logos that is quite distinct from the Heraclitean logos for which all is born of conflict and war. For all that *Insight* might appear to be a book that comes from Athens rather than from Jerusalem, in the last analysis it is a book that began with the author’s love of the one who was murdered outside Jerusalem on a lonely Friday, a book that, because its author was absorbed by what happened to this same figure on the third day, is able to advance

what is of worth in Athens and simply to leave the rest to wither away, a book that is able to teach its readers to do the same.

To return, then, to the experience of consolation, Lonergan's notion of being is invested with a hope that one does not usually find in philosophic meditations on being. This hope informs all of Lonergan's writings. Recall Ignatius: 'I call consolation every increase of hope, faith, and charity ...' The hope is precisely what Lonergan articulates once he moves onto explicitly theological terrain in the final chapter of *Insight*: the 'confident hope that God will bring [our] intellect to a knowledge, participation, possession of the unrestricted act of understanding' that God *is*.<sup>4</sup>

There is a great deal more that could be said about the Ignatian ethos of *Insight*, but I now move on to the other topics.

## **2 Election, Discernment, and Trinitarian Mysticism**

### *2.1 Two Treatments of Decision in Lonergan, Three Times of Decision in Ignatius*

It is now a commonplace among Lonergan students that there are two quite distinct treatments of decision in Lonergan's writings. The first treatment finds its most complete exposition in chapter 18 of *Insight*, the second in chapter 2 of *Method in Theology*. In *Insight*, in Lonergan's own words, the good is 'the intelligent and reasonable.' A good decision is a decision that is consistent with what one *knows* to be true and good. The decision-making process is very similar to the cognitional process, adding only the further element of free choice. In the process one assembles the data, one has a practical insight into what is to be done, one grasps that the evidence supports the practical insight,

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<sup>4</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, vol. 3 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) 724.

one judges that this is to be done, one freely chooses to do it. Again, the good is the intelligent and reasonable. In *Method in Theology*, on the other hand, the good is, as Lonergan says, a distinct notion – distinct from the intelligent and reasonable. This does not mean, obviously, that the good is the stupid and silly, but that it is intended in a kind of question that is distinct from the question for intelligence, What is it? and the question for judgment, Is it so? The question that intends the good is rather something like, Is this worthwhile? Is it truly or only apparently good? The good is aspired to in the intentional response of feeling to values. Possible values are apprehended in feelings. The judgment of value that knows the good proceeds from a discernment of these feelings in which possible values are apprehended, in order to determine which are the possible values that are apprehended by love and which are ambiguous from the standpoint of performative self-transcendence. When these judgments of value are made by a virtuous or authentic person with a good conscience, or, even better, by a person in love in an unqualified fashion, what is good is clearly known. The good is brought about by deciding and living up to one's decisions.

Now it is often thought that the treatment in *Method in Theology* represents an alternative position to the treatment in *Insight*, and so that the presentation of *Insight* should be discarded in favor of that which appears in *Method*. I have long resisted this position, even if Lonergan himself may have held it. Each of Lonergan's articulations of the dynamics of decision has its own limited validity. The two articulations complement each other. The first is not overshadowed by the second. Rather, they mark distinct times of making decisions. They are both permeated by love and grace. And the criteria of both accounts must be satisfied in every decision that we make.

The basis for my position is not found in Lonergan, but in Ignatius. Lonergan's two approaches to decision-making can be related to, mapped onto, Ignatius's times of election. In fact, Ignatius proposes 'Three Times, In Each of Which a Sound and Good Election May Be Made.'

The first time is when God our Lord so moves and attracts the will, that, without doubt or the power of doubting, such a devoted soul follows what has been pointed out to it, as St Paul and St Matthew did when they followed Christ our Lord.

The second time is when much light and knowledge is obtained by experiencing consolations and desolations, and by experience of the discernment of various spirits.

The third time is one of tranquility: when one considers, first, for what one is born, that is, to praise God our Lord, and to save one's soul; and when, desiring this, one chooses as the means to this end a kind or state of life within the bounds of the Church, in order that one may thereby be helped to serve God our Lord, and to save one's soul. I said a time of tranquility; that is, when the soul is not agitated by divers spirits, but enjoys the use of its natural powers freely and quietly.<sup>5</sup>

Ignatius goes on to specify two methods of making a decision in this third time, when one is not agitated by various 'pulls and counterpulls' (to use Eric Voegelin's expression<sup>6</sup>) but enjoys the use of one's natural powers (presumably, something like experience, understanding, judgment, and decision) freely and quietly. In these third-time methods the criterion is found in what Lonergan would call the constituents of *rational* choice. And so these third-time methods are applications of the general form of decision-making that Lonergan presents in *Insight*, where the good is the intelligent and reasonable. But in another and major section of the *Exercises* Ignatius proposes 'Rules for the Discernment of Spirits' that are to be employed in part (but only in part) when one is in the second time of election, when one is agitated by various pulls and counterpulls of affect

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5 *Spiritual Exercises* §§175-78

6 See Eric Voegelin, 'The Gospel and Culture,' in *Jesus and Man's Hope*, ed. D.C. Miller and D.Y. Hadidian (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 1961) passim.

apprehending various possible values or being repelled by possible anti-values. That second time corresponds, in fact, to the general form of decision-making that Lonergan presents in *Method in Theology*. And so Lonergan's two presentations of the dynamics of arriving at a good decision correspond to the third and second times of making a good election in Ignatius's presentation in the *Spiritual Exercises*.

I have four observations to make on this correspondence.

First, the times of decision that Ignatius proposes are exhaustive. Either God has moved one in such a way that one has no doubts as to what one is to do, and then one is in the first time, or God has not so moved one, and so one has questions, and then one is in either the second or the third time. In the latter case, either one is tranquil or one is agitated by various pulls and counterpulls. If one is agitated by various pulls and counterpulls, one is in the second time. One is not free to exercise one's natural powers of intelligence and reason but must rely on various guidelines for discerning what is good and what is not. If one is not agitated, one is in the third time, and then one is free to employ one's natural powers to arrive at judgments of value and decisions that, in Lonergan's terms, will acknowledge particular goods and goods of order as genuine values precisely because they are possible objects of rational choice.

Second, there is a complementarity between the second and third times in Ignatius, or between the two presentations in Lonergan. That is, the judgment of value and the decision that one arrives at in Ignatius's second time, by discerning pulls and counterpulls, must be able to be adjudicated as well by the criteria of intelligence, reason, and responsibility that are explicitly appealed to in the third time. And the judgments of value and decisions that are arrived at in the third time must produce the same 'peace of a good conscience' on the part of a virtuous person that would result from the proper discernment of affective pulls and counterpulls in the second time.

Third, then, Lonergan's account of judgments of value and decision in *Insight* presents principal points of the general form of St Ignatius's third time of making

decisions. This account explicitly prescind from any discussion of affective involvements, and so it at least implicitly presupposes that the person making a decision is not agitated in such a way that one is prevented from employing one's natural powers of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding. In this account one's decisions are good decisions if in fact they are harmonious with what one knows to be true and good. Moral integrity is a matter of *generating decisions and consequent actions that are consistent with what one knows*, that is, that are consistent with the inner words of judgments of fact and judgments of value that one has sufficient reason to hold to be true. And if this is the case, then Lonergan's account in *Insight* would remain as permanently valid as Ignatius's account of the third time of election. It just would not be the only account, because it names only one of the times of making a good decision. Nor is this mode of decision in fact independent of grace and the gift of God's love. For while it is by employing one's natural powers of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding that one arrives at the decision, still the consistent fidelity to the norms of those natural operations that is required if one is to be a person who makes good decisions is itself a function of God's gift of God's love. The decision-making processes that Lonergan outlines in chapter 18 of *Insight* are no more independent of the presence of grace than are the decisions that St Ignatius speaks about when he writes of the third time of election. It is the consolation of God's love that leaves one tranquil enough to exercise one's own attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility in a consistent manner.

Fourth, the presentation that is found in *Method in Theology* is relevant, not to Ignatius's third time but to his second time of election. For here it is self-transcendent affectivity, affectivity that matches the unrestricted reach of the notion of value, the affectivity of a person in love in an unqualified fashion, that provides the criteria for the decision. Which course of action reflects, embodies, incarnates the self-transcendent love that matches the reach of the transcendental notion of value? The answer to that question

gives the indication as to the direction in which one is to go as one heads towards a judgment of value and a consequent decision. All of this is confirmed by the considerations that Ignatius places in the second week of the *Exercises* precisely in the context of heading toward the election: the Two Standards, the Three Classes of Persons, the Three Degrees of Humility. All are beckoning to the total response of self-transcendent love.

## 2.2 Trinitarian Mysticism

It is a matter of great interest, I think, that Lonergan's two accounts of decision provide the elements also of two distinct but complementary approaches to a psychological analogy for a systematic understanding of Trinitarian processions and relations. At this point the Trinitarian mysticism of Lonergan joins and advances that of St Ignatius. If I am right about the correspondence of Lonergan and Ignatius on times of decision, then Lonergan relates the Trinity to Ignatius's own moments for making decisions that proceed from authentic judgments of value.

In the first psychological analogy found in Lonergan's work, presented in intricate detail in the systematic part of his work *De Deo trino*,<sup>7</sup> the analogue in the creature is found in those moments of existential self-constitution in which we grasp the sufficiency of evidence regarding what is good, utter the judgment of value, 'This is good,' and proceed to decisions commensurate with that grasp of evidence and judgment of value. From the act of grasping the evidence there proceeds the act of judging value, and from the two together there proceeds the love that embraces the good and carries it out. So too in divine self-constitution, from the Father's grasp of the grounds for affirming the

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<sup>7</sup> 2009: Now available as *The Triune God: Systematics*, vol. 12 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

goodness of all that the Father is and knows, there proceeds the eternal Word of the Father saying Yes to it all, and from the Father and the Word together there proceeds the eternal love that is the Holy Spirit. This theology of God's own self-constitution in knowledge, word, and love is informed by an analogy with human rational self-consciousness as Lonergan has understood it in *Insight*. One's self-appropriation of one's rational self-consciousness in the form in which it is presented in *Insight*, or again as it functions in St Ignatius's third time of election, will ultimately entail a recognition of those processes, those processions, as constituting an *image* of the Trinitarian processions themselves.

But in his later work Lonergan proposes a distinct psychological analogy for the Trinity, one that is more closely related to the account of decision in *Method in Theology* and so to St Ignatius's first and second times of election. Here is what he says:

The psychological analogy ... has its starting point in that higher synthesis of intellectual, rational, and moral consciousness that is the dynamic state of being in love. Such love manifests itself in its judgments of value. And the judgments are carried out in decisions that are acts of loving. Such is the analogy found in the creature.

Now in God the origin is the Father, in the New Testament named *ho Theos*, who is identified with *agapē* (1 John 4:8, 16). Such love expresses itself in its Word, its Logos, its *verbum spirans amorem*, which is a judgment of value. The judgment of value is sincere, and so it grounds the Proceeding Love that is identified with the Holy Spirit.<sup>8</sup>

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8 Bernard Lonergan, 'Christology Today: Methodological Considerations,' in *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985) 93.

As moral integrity, according to the presentation in *Method in Theology*, is a function of generating the judgments of value of a person who is in love in an unqualified way, and as those judgments of value are carried out in decisions that are acts of loving, so the Father now is infinite and eternal being-in-love, an *agapē* that generates a Word, the eternal Yes that is the Son, a Word that breathes love, a Yes that grounds the Proceeding Love that is breathed forth as from *agapē* and from its manifestation in such a Word.

‘Such is the analogy found in the creature,’ Lonergan writes. Notice that he does not say, ‘Such is the analogy from nature.’ In *De Deo trino*, he repeats over and over again the affirmation of the First Vatican Council that we are able to attain an imperfect, analogical, developing, and most fruitful understanding of the divine mysteries by proceeding from analogies with what we know by natural knowledge. It is clear from this constant repetition of the Council that he intends the analogy that he is presenting in *De Deo trino* to be an analogy from nature. Commentators on the two analogies that Lonergan offers, the earlier and the later, have remarked that, while the earlier analogy proceeds from below upwards in human consciousness, the later analogy proceeds from above downwards. But there is a much more important difference. Each of the analogies is an analogy found in the creature, but the earlier analogy is found in nature itself, in our natural powers of understanding uttering a word of assent and of love proceeding from understanding and word, while the created analogue in the second analogy is already in the supernatural order. To my knowledge, this has yet to be emphasized or even recognized in the literature around Lonergan’s trinitarian theology. The dynamic state of being in love in an unqualified way is (2009: flows from) what theology has traditionally called sanctifying grace, and in Lonergan’s theology sanctifying grace is a created participation in and imitation of the active spiration of Father and Word breathing the Holy Spirit, while the habit of charity (2009: the dynamic state of being in love in an unqualified way) that flows from sanctifying grace is a created participation in and imitation of the passive spiration that is the Holy Spirit. More concretely for Christians, I

think, sanctifying grace is a created participation in and imitation of the Incarnate Word, whose humanity is a participation in and imitation of the one he called ‘Abba, Father.’ And what is this ‘Father?’ What would it be to participate in the Incarnate Son, who himself is an imitation of ‘Abba’? ‘... love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be children of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on the bad as well as the good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest alike’ (Matthew 5.44-45) As the Holy Spirit proceeds from the *agapē* that is the Father and the Word that the Father utters in saying Yes to God’s own goodness, so the habit of charity – a love that extends to enemies and that gives sunshine and rain to all alike – flows from our created participation in and imitation of that active spiration, that is, from the entitative change that is the grace that makes us not only pleasing to God, *gratia gratum faciens*, but somehow imitative of the divine goodness. ‘You must therefore be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect’ (Matthew 5.48). In this participation and imitation, this mimesis, if you will, we are moved beyond the otherwise endless cycle of violence, recrimination, judgment, blame, accusation, murder, hate, and false religion. So this habit of grace sets up a state of grace, where a state of grace is a social situation, an intersubjective set of relationships, where the founding subjects, as it were, are the three divine subjects, and where grace prevails because they have come to dwell in us and with us.

In the first, natural analogy, the analogy that recognizes in human nature an image of the Trinitarian processions, love flows from knowledge and word, as Lonergan emphasizes over and over again in *De Deo trino*. In the second, supernatural analogy, the analogy that recognizes that grace makes us not only images of but also *participants* in the Trinitarian relations, the dynamic state of being in love precedes our knowledge, and it gives rise to the knowledge that is known as faith, where faith is understood as the knowledge born of being in love with God. But more radically, it must be said, here too love flows from knowledge, but not from our knowledge. It flows, rather, from the

*verbum spirans amorem*, the word breathing love, that is the image of the eternal Father, the Word who himself proceeds from eternity as the Father's judgment of value pronouncing an infinite Yes to God's own goodness. And in this case the psychological analogue for the Trinitarian processions, while it is still a created analogue, is no longer a natural analogue. For the dynamic state of being in love that is the analogue for the divine Father is itself the supernatural created habitual grace that we have known as sanctifying grace. And so the psychological analogy now provides, not simply an image of the Trinitarian processions, but a participation in them and *an imitation, a mimesis, of them*.

And so to return for a moment to the times of election: (1) in the third time, we employ our natural powers of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deciding to arrive at good decisions, and in so doing we are embodying the natural analogue for the divine processions, where we are images of the Trinity; (2) in the second time, we are discerning the pulls and counterpulls of affective resonances, so as to arrive at decisions that will promote in us not only the image of the Trinity but participations in the divine being-in-love uttering the eternal Yes and with that Yes breathing the eternal Proceeding Love, and so that will enable us to be not only images of but also participants in the divine processions; and (3) in the first time, that dynamic state of being in love and its word of value judgment are so dominant that the loving decisions and actions flow spontaneously forth from them in a way that admits no doubt as to where they come from or whose life is being reflected in them: 'I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me' (Galatians 2.20).

### **3 Consolation without a Cause**

This brings us quite spontaneously and organically to the discussion of consolation without a cause. Lonergan refers approvingly to Karl Rahner's understanding of Ignatian consolation without a cause as consolation with a content but without an apprehended

object. David Fleming's contemporary reading of the *Spiritual Exercises* seems to support this interpretation. 'We know the experience of having certain thoughts, achievements, or events which bring about a feeling of great consolation in our lives. We also know the effect of another person or persons whose very presence or conversation can give us joy. But we can more readily attribute our consolation directly to the touch of God when there is no thought, no event, no person – in general, no object of any sort – which seems to be the source of such a movement ... in these cases, we should be aware that God is truly said to be the direct source of all our consolation.'<sup>9</sup>

What Lonergan does with this position is perhaps more important than his agreement with Rahner on this point. For he relates this understanding of consolation without a cause to his own reversal of what had become almost taken for granted in both the Augustinian and Thomist traditions, namely, that nothing can be loved unless it is first known, *nihil amatum nisi praecognitum*. Of the Scholastic dictum Lonergan writes:

It used to be said, *Nihil amatum nisi praecognitum*, Knowledge precedes love. The truth of this tag is the fact that ordinarily operations on the fourth level of intentional consciousness presuppose and complement corresponding operations on the other three. There is a minor exception to this rule inasmuch as people do fall in love, and that falling in love is something disproportionate to its causes, conditions, occasions, antecedents. For falling in love is a new beginning, an exercise of vertical liberty in which one's world undergoes a new organization. But the major exception to the Latin tag is God's gift of his love flooding our hearts. Then we are in the dynamic state of being in love. But who it is we love, is neither given nor as yet understood. Our capacity for moral self-transcendence has found a fulfilment that brings deep joy

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<sup>9</sup> David Fleming, *A Contemporary Reading of St. Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1976) 88-89.

and profound peace. Our love reveals to us values we had not appreciated, values of prayer and worship, of repentance and belief. But if we would know what is going on within us, if we would learn to integrate it with the rest of our living, we have to inquire, investigate, seek counsel. So it is that in religious matters love precedes knowledge and, as that love is God's gift, the very beginning of faith is due to God's grace.

A consolation that has a content but no apprehended object is correlated with a reversal of a long-standing philosophical and theological tradition, with the priority of love over knowledge, with the possibility of falling in love without yet knowing who it is that we are in love with. Carlo Maria Cardinal Martini, who presented the keynote address in the Lonergan centenary celebration at the Gregorian University, made a great deal over this reversal in *Method in Theology*, finding it to be the potential source of a number of radical transformations in the church's pastoral theology and practice.<sup>10</sup> At least one of those transformations is clear in *Method in Theology* itself: 'On this showing, ... the ancient problem of the salvation of non-Christians [is] greatly reduced.'<sup>11</sup> That is, the reversal is itself the source of the highly promising potential that is found in Lonergan's work for the development of a Christian, and indeed Catholic, understanding of the dialogue of world religions.

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10 Carlo Maria Cardinal Martini, S.J., 'Bernard Lonergan al Servizio della Chiesa,' *La Civiltà Cattolica* (2005:1) 329-41; subsequently translated by Richard Liddy and published in *Theological Studies* 66 (2005) 517-26: 'Bernard Lonergan at the Service of the Church.'

<sup>11</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (latest printing, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003) 123.

Let me add one further implication, one that I believe is completely harmonious with what St. Ignatius says about consolation without a cause. Lonergan learned from Dietrich von Hildebrand the distinction between intentional and nonintentional feelings. In nonintentional feelings ‘the relation of the feeling to the cause or goal is simply that of effect to cause, of trend to goal. The feeling itself does not presuppose and arise out of perceiving, imagining, representing the cause or goal.’<sup>12</sup> Intentional feelings, though, ‘answer to what is intended, apprehended, represented.’<sup>13</sup> In *Method in Theology* all of the examples that Lonergan gives of nonintentional states or trends are somewhat homely affairs: fatigue, irritability, bad humor, anxiety, hunger, thirst, sexual discomfort. But if consolation without a cause is consolation that has a content but that is not a response to an apprehended object, then is it not, in its originary moment, nonintentional? This does not mean that it is without direction. It means that it is a supernatural instance, a supernatural transformation, of that upwardly *but indeterminately* directed dynamism that Lonergan calls finality. Is this perhaps what Ignatius is getting at when he distinguishes the actual moment of this consolation from the subsequent periods in which one begins to work out plans or action or to make resolutions? That is, is Ignatius suggesting something like a distinction of nonintentional and intentional moments and the need for discernment once the dynamic has become intentional? I think so. For those who resist this interpretation, let me concede, however, that, since this consolation comes from God and is the fruit of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Word, at its source is it God’s own response to God as God apprehends God. But we do not know that simply by experiencing it. I have already stated that this consolation without a cause *does* proceed from knowledge, but that the knowledge is not ours, but is identical with the

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<sup>12</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 30.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

eternal Father and the Father's only begotten Son, the eternal Word of the Father, the *verbum spirans amorem*.

#### **4 Rules for Thinking with the Church**

With respect to Lonergan's relation to the Ignatian rules for thinking with the church, I wish to take a position that will not paper over what I think are the differences between the explicit statements of Ignatius and the developments found in Lonergan's latest writings regarding authority in general and, by implication at least, church authority in particular. But I also want to take a position that acknowledges the continuity. In all fairness to both Lonergan and Ignatius, the topic is one that could demand another study at least as long as this one. Therefore I can do nothing more than indicate general lines of inquiry and direction.

First, then, no one is second to Lonergan in fidelity to the defined dogmas of the church. In addition, his devotion to the papacy is manifested in the fact that his work on grace and *verbum* in Aquinas and on understanding in *Insight* are two parts of his own creative response to what he experienced as a vocation awakened by a papal invitation to theologians, namely, Pope Leo XIII's invitation in *Aeterni Patris* 'vetera novis augere et perficere,' 'to augment and complete the old with the new.' These attitudes of fidelity and devotion are profoundly Ignatian and profoundly Jesuit. Lonergan's orthodoxy and fidelity were acknowledged during the papacy of Pope Paul VI, who named him an original member of the International Theological Commission and a consultant to the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Believers. I have personal memories of his distress over denials of the divinity of Christ, the Trinity, and the resurrection of Jesus in some contemporary Catholic theological writing and biblical scholarship. His description of himself in *Method in Theology* as a Catholic theologian with quite conservative views on church dogma is accurate. I was told during my recent visit in Rome for the centenary

celebrations at the Gregorian University that the papal greetings sent to this meeting from the Vatican Secretary of State and the concluding lecture by Cardinal Cottier, until recently the official papal theologian, were both semi-official endorsements of the orthodoxy and fidelity of Lonergan's work.

The faculty of Regis College, in its faculty days at the opening of the 2004-2005 academic year, reflected on a recent allocution of Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, on the fidelity that is required of us even today to the spirit of Ignatius's rules for thinking with the church. My principal contribution to that faculty discussion was to indicate a bit of perplexity as to why we were not focusing primarily on the issues of dogma and creed, on matters having to do with the divinity of Christ, the Incarnation, the Trinity, and the Resurrection. These are the areas, I submit, where there can be no departure from or difference with the teaching of the church on the part of anyone who would exercise an Ignatian vocation within the church. These are the principal areas where the meaning must remain permanent even as it might be transposed into different idioms. But there are other items that *do* remain open, and the Ignatian response in the face of these more open issues is a more nuanced matter. I shall try to articulate in a shorthand way just what these nuances entail, as I believe Bernard Lonergan would understand them.

First, Lonergan is clear that the notion of dogma presented by Vatican I must be interpreted quite strictly: dogma as spoken of by Vatican I, Lonergan says, is intrinsically characterized as stating something that could not be known by us at all unless it had been revealed by God. It is this that Lonergan invests with a permanence of valid meaning.

Second, at several points in his later, post-*Method* development there seem to be subtle attempts to demythologize the notion of authority. And I use the term 'demythologize' with some – authority! That is to say, when Lonergan handed me an

offprint of his short but trenchant article ‘Dialectic of Authority,’<sup>14</sup> he made what I found at the time to be a somewhat cryptic remark to the effect that perhaps much thinking about authority reflects mythic consciousness. When I asked him to elaborate, he declined, but pointed to the article. In this article Lonergan defines authority as legitimate power, and insists that legitimacy is conferred by authenticity. Without authenticity, there may be power but the power is not legitimate, and so there is no authority. In a similar vein, in the paper ‘Religious Knowledge,’<sup>15</sup> he asks about the source of genuine religious conviction. More precisely, he asks, How can one tell whether one’s appropriation of religion is genuine or unauthentic and, more radically, how can one tell one is not appropriating a religious tradition that has become unauthentic? After Kierkegaard, I submit, we cannot avoid facing such wrenching questions. Lonergan’s answer relies not on any external authority, even the highest in the Catholic religious world, but on the inner conviction of authenticity generated by self-transcendence. This seems, it must be said, quite different from what is explicitly conveyed in Ignatius’s rules for thinking with the church (though perhaps not in the rest of the *Spiritual Exercises*). And the difference is due in part to the fact that we do live in a very different world from that of St Ignatius.

Third, among Catholic, indeed orthodox Catholic, thinkers, none is clearer on this difference than René Girard, and I think Girard could be used to complement Lonergan at this point. While Lonergan is the authoritative source on the difference between classicist and historical consciousness, Girard is the more complete thinker when it comes to the constitution of mythic consciousness. If much contemporary thinking about authority is still a matter of mythic consciousness, perhaps Girard even more than Lonergan has alerted us to the danger that lies therein. For the danger is not simply in the order of cognition. Mythic consciousness for Girard provides cover stories for human violence.

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14 Bernard Lonergan, ‘Dialectic of Authority,’ now in *A Third Collection* 5-12.

15 Bernard Lonergan, ‘Religious Knowledge,’ now in *A Third Collection* 129-45.

The modern world, the post-Renaissance world, even in its pre-Enlightenment phase, and so even in the period of St Ignatius, no longer produced myths in the strict sense of the term, but it had not yet completely moved beyond unconsciously perpetuating victimage mechanisms that are covered over in myths but present in much more explicit form in what Girard calls the medieval and modern religious texts of persecution.<sup>16</sup> The papacy of John Paul II took the enormous step of acknowledging that this has happened in the history of the church and of asking forgiveness for the church's own complicity in violence. Still, it must be acknowledged that the church is *semper reformanda*, always in need of reformation and forgiveness, that the church of the future will ask forgiveness for the church's *present* complicity in violence, and that the maintenance of a system that controls thought and expression with an authority without authenticity, wherever that occurs, is a remnant of mythic consciousness, a remnant that, while it is no longer believed by most, still exerts its powerful influence in ways that are at times very harmful.

Fourth, if I am correct that Lonergan is thoroughly Ignatian in what he writes about decision, and in fact that he provides only further differentiations of dynamics of decision that are already present in Ignatius's text, then his work is actually advancing the positions that are already present in the work of the founder of his religious order. And perhaps this gives us the key to the manner in which Lonergan can teach us a genuine Ignatian response to ecclesial authority in matters that are non-dogmatic: advance the positions. I'm sure that Lonergan would not find himself in complete agreement with everything that Pope Leo XIII wrote in *Aeterni Patris*, in fact that the encyclical probably was at variance with what Lonergan eventually came to recognize as an adequate appropriation of Aquinas. But that was never Lonergan's issue with the Pope. He

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16 See René Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. Yvonne Freccero (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1986). The point is well made in the first two chapters.

advanced what he found salutary in the encyclical and made no comments at all about what he found limited. And this shows a characteristic that marked all of his reading of other authors, not just of popes. ‘What are they onto? Go for the insights!’ he said once, in response to a question about reading other authors. Why can’t we do that also with popes? As David Tracy said to me in a personal conversation, Lonergan was an extremely generous reader. This too is very Ignatian: every good Christian, Ignatius tells us at the beginning of the *Exercises*, will be more ready to accept than to reject the proposition of another. It is a question of readiness, of attitude, of what Lonergan calls antecedent willingness. There is a twofold methodological principle that Lonergan applies to the reading of other authors. The primary directive is always, Advance the positions. The other directive, Reverse the counterpositions, is, I would maintain, secondary. The basic Ignatian directive is, Love the church and love those who speak for it. Go for their insights. Find out what they are onto. The rest, in time, will drop away without a lot of bother. That is the Ignatian thrust as it would be reinterpreted by Bernard Lonergan. Lonergan’s very advance of the Ignatian positions to the point of helping us appropriate the dynamics of the authenticity generated by self-transcendence can be the source of the reversal of the mythic remnants even in the Ignatian text, a reversal that can be done without any fanfare at all if we follow the guidelines of the positive thrust toward self-transcendent love. Reversing counterpositions is always secondary to advancing positions. Expect to find truth, and be disappointed if you do not; rather than expecting to find nonsense, and being surprised if you find something worth while. Make the texts you read *better* than they really are.

Let me return for one more moment to Girard, though. For what I am advocating is not easy, and it is particularly difficult if inauthentic exercise of authority has been harmful to one’s own well-being, or to that of one’s loved ones, if it has marginalized or victimized one or treated one as a scapegoat. The greatest temptation in that case is to engage in reverse scapegoating vis-à-vis the churches and their authorities. This is simply

what René Girard calls mimetic violence. With the grace that establishes us in love, it is possible for us to acknowledge injuries while not responding in kind. The one whom we *are* to imitate, the one who himself imitated the Father who lets his sun shine on the good and the bad and his rain to fall on the just and the unjust, himself shows the way: ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’ As Girard writes at the very end of his book *The Scapegoat*, ‘The time has come for us to forgive one another. If we wait any longer, there will not be time enough.’

To conclude, I began by speaking of two movements in my paper: influences from Ignatius on Lonergan, and contributions of Lonergan to the development of the Ignatian charism. I hope I have offered some evidence that a fruitful interpretation of Lonergan’s entire life’s work would regard it as a massive advance on many fronts of the positions on authentic religion and genuine spirituality that are to be found in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius Loyola.