

**Essays in Systematic Theology 42:  
Trinitarian Elements in a Theology of Religion:  
A Tribute to Frederick E. Crowe<sup>1</sup>**

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On the evening of November 26, 1984, Frederick Crowe delivered the Regis College Chancellor's Lecture. It was entitled 'Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions.' The event was scheduled to be a tribute to Bernard Lonergan, in anticipation of his eightieth birthday on December 17, just three weeks later. In a singularly unplanned turn of events, Fr Lonergan died on the morning of November 26. I remember vividly the emotions of reverence and awe that permeated the lecture hall that evening, as Frederick Crowe, Lonergan's faithful friend and student for almost forty years at the time, set forth what he believed was Lonergan's thinking regarding the relation of the divine missions of the Holy Spirit and the Son both to each other and to the world religions.

This evening, on the joyous occasion on which Regis College pays tribute to four-hundred years of Jesuit ministry and presence in Canada, I am honored to be invited to contribute to this celebration. I don't think the theology that I will express this evening would have emerged had I not spent twenty-seven years in Toronto, teaching at Regis College and working with Frederick Crowe at the Lonergan Research Institute, along with many others: Michael Shields, John Hochban, Bob Croken, Marcela Dayao, Deborah Agnew, Greg Lauzon, Danny Monsour, and Aaron Lupton, along with John Dadosky and Chris Jacobs-Vandegeer, who worked at the Institute while they were completing their

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<sup>1</sup> This was the 2011 Chancellor's Lecture at Regis College, University of Toronto, delivered on November 18, 2011.

doctorates. Many years ago, after I had worked my way through *Insight*, I asked myself, ‘What would I say about the author of this book if I knew nothing about him or her?’ And my answer was twofold: that the author was probably strongly influenced by the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius, and that the author was definitely not an American. There is in that book a respect for culture, for the meanings and values that inform ways of living, as constitutive of society that is foreign to the American mind. When I moved to Canada in 1979, where my first course was entitled ‘Religion and Culture,’ and where I had in the class twenty-six students representing twelve quite distinct cultures, the Canadian background of the author of *Insight* became palpable to me, and has remained so ever since. So too, I think the theological thrust of what I wish to say this evening would have emerged only with great difficulty had that emergence not occurred in Canada, and even more specifically in Toronto. Fr Crowe’s Chancellor’s Lecture in 1984 expressed that thrust in an exemplary way. Thus after I received the gracious invitation from Joseph Schner a little over a year ago to present the lecture this evening, it was not difficult for me to decide that I would pay tribute to Fred Crowe, drawing on the Chancellor’s Lecture that he delivered in 1984, and trying to move forward the theology expressed in that lecture.

The lecture ‘Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions’ has been one of the most important theological writings in my own development, and this evening I would like to share with you how I have tried to combine the emphases of that lecture with a magnificent systematic-theological proposal that appears in the final chapter of Lonergan’s systematic work on the Trinity. In that proposal the four divine relations – paternity, filiation, active spiration, and passive spiration – are said to be participated in and imitated by four distinct created supernatural realities offered as grace in human history. In language dictated by the Scholastic context in which he had to teach in those days, he called these created participations in

Trinitarian life: (1) the secondary act of existence of the Incarnation, which is a metaphysical term meant to designate the created condition for the hypostatic union; that grace, he says, participates in and imitates paternity; ‘whoever sees me,’ says Jesus, ‘sees the Father’; (2) the light of glory, the created and elevated condition for the beatific knowledge that we hope for; this grace participates in and imitates filiation, as the Son leads us, the adopted children of God, back to the Father; (3) sanctifying grace, the created and elevated base of a created relation to the indwelling Holy Spirit; this grace participates in and imitates active spiration, which is the divine relation of the Father and the Son together to the proceeding Holy Spirit; and (4) the habit of charity, the created base of a created relation to the Father and the Son; this grace participates in and imitates passive spiration, the Holy Spirit, the third person of the triune God; through it we return God’s gift of love.

This hypothesis is the ground of a theology of the Trinity in history. I will argue that Crowe’s paper is of great importance as we attempt to transpose at least part of Lonergan’s hypothesis into categories that are not metaphysical and not Scholastic but that are derived from human interiority and religious experience – from what Lonergan calls interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness – and to relate that hypothesis to a theology of history.

My presentation will unfold through three steps. First, I will summarize the main points of Crowe’s Chancellor’s Lecture and embellish it with some of my own additions. Second, I will relate Crowe’s proposal to Lonergan’s hypothesis about the connection of Trinitarian life with our life in God, and so will argue for a Trinitarian structure to all habitual grace, wherever it is found – and in Crowe’s proposal the offer of habitual grace is universal, made to all women and men at every time and place. And finally, picking up on Crowe’s suggestions regarding what such a theology of the divine missions means for evangelization, I will place

this entire discussion into the context of a theology of history based in Lonergan's proposal in *Method in Theology* regarding the scale of values. In this way I hope to advance the major thrust of Crowe's theology of world religions, which I believe to be the single best available theological option on the question, one that combines reverence for the Christological and Trinitarian doctrines of the Christian church with the challenge to meet contemporary exigencies.

Lest you become discouraged by the length of the first two parts, let me indicate from the beginning that part 3 is mercifully brief.

### **1 'Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions'**

I cannot do justice this evening to the richness of Crowe's lecture. I must be content to indicate its basic thesis and a corollary to that thesis and to expand on these a bit in my own language. The basic thesis is the following:

We have ... to reverse the order in which commonly we think of the Son and Spirit in the world. Commonly we think of God first sending the Son, and of the Spirit being sent in that context, to bring to completion the work of the Son. The thesis says that, on the contrary, God first sent the Spirit, and then sent the Son in the context of the Spirit's mission, to bring to completion, perhaps not precisely the work of the Spirit, but the work which God conceived as one work to be executed in the two steps of the twofold mission of first the Spirit and then the Son.

Moreover, adds Crowe, a complete theology of the divine self-gift would add to the missions of the Spirit in love and of the Son in the outer word of revelation the self-gift of the Father in hope.<sup>2</sup>

I have found it important in lecturing on this basic thesis at Marquette to distinguish, in Lonergan's terms, between the way of discovery and the way of teaching or the way of synthesis. Obviously, for Christians the mission of the Son is first in the order of discovery. We would not even know that there *is* a Holy Spirit were it not for the revelation of God's purpose and of God's being in and through the Incarnate Word. But systematic theology reverses the order when it offers its own synthesis. What is last in the order of discovery becomes first in the order of synthesis, and what is first in the order of discovery is postponed to later in the order of synthesis. While we move in the way of discovery from the mission of the Son to the mission of the Holy Spirit, in a systematic-theological synthetic statement about the missions and their relation to each other, we begin with the mission of the Holy Spirit and proceed to the mission of the Son. That is the methodological point behind Crowe's thesis, and it is stated explicitly in his paper.

This basic thesis has a corollary regarding the proper Christian approach to the world religions, namely, that 'their positive moment is the fruit of the Spirit present among them, but ... this partial moment calls for its completion: the need of the world religions to hear the gospel message is the same need still that the world had when God sent the only Son to be its way and truth and life.'<sup>3</sup>

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2 Frederick E. Crowe, 'Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions, in Crowe, *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006) 325-26.

3 Ibid. 326.

On the basic thesis and its corollary, I am convinced, there can be constructed a theology of ecclesial mission in the global multi-religious context of our time. I spoke to that issue just a couple of weeks ago in a lecture at Marquette University,<sup>4</sup> but my emphasis here this evening is preliminary to such ecclesiological reflection. For without the missions of the Holy Spirit and of the Incarnate Word, there would be no mission of the church, and without a mission there would be no church at all. Only within the context of the divine missions can the mission of the church be properly understood, because only within that context does the mission of the church exist. The theology of the immanent constitution of life in God, which is what the divine missions are all about, has to be articulated in a manner that enables us to understand life in God as a universal human possibility due to a universal gift on God's part of a share in what we know to be Trinitarian life. That prior step, I propose, would constitute a position on the Trinitarian elements in a Christian and Catholic theology of the world's religions, relating the divine missions to those religions. That preliminary matter is my point here this evening.

Now I move to expanding a bit on Crowe's thesis and its corollary.

While similar Trinitarian emphases may have been put forward in other proposals, mine (and I think Lonergan's and Crowe's) would differ from others that I have seen in that we remain committed to the permanent validity and ongoing fruitfulness of the structure of the Augustinian-Thomist psychological analogy for understanding Trinitarian processions. Since the missions *are* the

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4 Robert M. Doran, "As the Father Has Sent Me": The Mission of the Church in a Multi-Religious World,' [www.lonerganresource.com](http://www.lonerganresource.com), Events/Conferences/Doing Catholic Systematic Theology in a Multi-religious World, third colloquium; now Essay 41 in this e-book.

processions linked with an external term that is a consequent condition of the procession being also a mission, the psychological analogy will extend its usefulness beyond the understanding of the processions into an understanding of the missions themselves. This is the central point in what I want to say this evening.

I begin with the affirmation, completely in keeping with Crowe's thesis, that the Holy Spirit is God's first gift. The Holy Spirit is God's first gift, first in the eternal immanent Trinitarian life, and then, because the missions *are* the processions joined to an external term, also in time and history. Aquinas argues in question 38 of the first part of the *Summa theologiae* that 'Gift' is a personal name for the Holy Spirit (article 1) and that it is a proper and not appropriated name (article 2). The Holy Spirit is the gift that the Father and the Son give to each other in the eternal Now, precisely as together they communicate the divine nature to the relation of love that unites them. That communication of the divine nature is, from the side of the Father and the Son together, the relation known as active spiration, and from the side of the Holy Spirit breathed by the Father and the Son, it is the relation known as passive spiration.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> In greater detail: For the Father to beget the Son and for the Son to be begotten *is* for them together actively to breathe the Spirit of love. Again, for the Father to utter the Word and for the Word to be uttered by the Father *is* for them together actively to breathe Proceeding Love. The Holy Spirit's reception of the divine nature from the Father and the Son constitutes their Gift to each other, the Holy Spirit as the relation known as passive spiration. Two really distinct mutually opposed relations (speaker and word, Father and Son) are really identical with one relation (active spiration) that is mutually opposed to the love that proceeds from them (the relation of passive spiration).

Now in Crowe's theology the mission of the Holy Spirit historicizes and universalizes in history the eternal Gift uniting the Father and the Son as their Proceeding Love. That eternal Gift is present in human history as God's first gift in time in the order of grace. In this same theology, the gift of the Holy Spirit is the inchoate supernatural fulfilment of a natural desire for union with God, a pledge of the beatific knowing and loving that is our supernatural destiny. The gift of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son from the beginning of human history as the gift of God's love, is universal. Wherever there is human attentiveness, intelligence, rationality, and moral responsibility pursuing in however compact a fashion the objectives of meaning, truth, being, and the good, with these pursuits encased, as it were, in a tidal movement that includes aesthetic and dramatic intentions of the beautiful and ultimately of God's glory, there is the offer of the gift of God's love.

Crowe says that the Father 'sent the Son in the context of the Spirit's mission.' I interpret this to mean that in the fullness of the Holy Spirit's time, when grace, the gift of the Spirit working in history, had prepared the human race through the Chosen People to receive the fullness of the revelation of God's gift, the Father sent the Son, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, baptized in the Holy Spirit, driven by the same Spirit into the desert for forty days, led back by the Spirit to preach the coming of God's reign, and raised to life from death by the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thus the mission of the Holy Spirit, the universal gift of divine love, is not only intensified but also revealed, made thematic, in the mission of the Son, where it plays a constitutive role. Apart from the mission of the Son, the mission of the Holy Spirit may make a difference in human consciousness – I will insist that it does – but that does not mean that it is known. The revelation of God's love in the mission of the Word is what makes it known, and in doing so this revelation

establishes personal relations of human beings with God, that is, with the three divine persons, and with one another that would not be possible in any explicit manner without that revelation. The mission of the Son is constitutive of human friendship with God, the friendship that is inaugurated by the gift of the Holy Spirit. The mission of the Son articulates the meaning that renders this friendship not simply conscious in some unobjectified fashion, as it has been since the dawn of history, but also known.

To say that the gift of grace has been conscious but not known recalls Lonergan's reference in *Method in Theology* to the beautiful statement of Olivier Rabut, who in his book *L'expérience religieuse fondamentale* asked 'whether there exists any unassailable fact' in the realm of religious experience, and 'found such a fact in the existence of love. It is as though a room were filled with music though one can have no sure knowledge of its source. There is in the world, as it were, a charged field of love and meaning; here and there it reaches a notable intensity; but it is ever unobtrusive, hidden, inviting each of us to join. And join we must if we are to perceive it, for our perceiving is through our own loving.'<sup>6</sup> That description, I believe, articulates something that is conscious in an ineffable manner, but the revelation in the incarnate Word makes possible an explicit relation to the three divine subjects who are the mystery of love, and indeed with each of them distinctly. Because of that revelation, and only because of it, we pray 'Our Father,' as Jesus taught us to pray, but we also pray 'Lord Jesus Christ,' and 'Come, Holy Spirit,' and when we say these three prayers we know that we are addressing distinct subjects of the one divine consciousness, distinct divine persons. Each of

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6 Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990) 290, with reference to Olivier Rabut, *L'expérience religieuse fondamentale* (Tournai: Castermann, 1969) 168.

the divine persons is a distinct term of an explicit relation on the part of the human spirit. The explicit character of those relations would not be possible without the revelation of the gift that occurs in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The issue of the extent to which these are distinct relations is a further question. For Lonergan relations are really distinguished, not by a multiplication of terms, but by a multiplication of orderings.<sup>7</sup> For the moment I am simply stating what every Christian already knows from his or her prayer life, namely, that there are three distinct terms in our explicit created human relation to the triune God. Later I will argue that there are not three but two distinct orderings and so two distinct relations, corresponding to the created participations in active and passive spiration identified by Lonergan, respectively, with sanctifying grace and charity.

Now, in response to a lecture drawing on Crowe's essay that I gave at Marquette University in 2009,<sup>8</sup> the principal question that arose was, What does this say about Pentecost? Well, the same Holy Spirit who from the beginning of history has been sent in an 'invisible' manner was sent in a visible, audible, palpable form by the Father and the Son on the apostles and the other women and men gathered in the upper room on Pentecost, in what may be called a visible mission of the Holy Spirit, precisely to fulfill the twofold mission of the Son and the Spirit, and to enable a public acknowledgment that what happened in Jesus was indeed the revelation of the triune God's universal presence in history. Pentecost is not the first and original gift of the Holy Spirit to humankind, but rather the special

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<sup>7</sup> See *The Triune God: Systematics* 248-51.

<sup>8</sup> Robert M. Doran, 'What Is the Gift of the Holy Spirit?'

[www.lonerganresource.com](http://www.lonerganresource.com), Events/Conferences/ Doing Catholic Systematic Theology in a Multi-religious World, first colloquium; also found on the same site as Essay 34 in the e-book *Essays in Systematic Theology*.

confirmation by the Holy Spirit in a visible, audible, palpable manner that the mission of the Word was indeed the revelation of what God has been doing and will continue to do in the invisible mission of the Spirit, namely, pour out divine love on humankind. Pentecost is the birth of the community that knows both divine missions. The mutual interplay of divine and human freedom can now be carried on in explicit recognition of what, prior to the revelation that occurs in the mission of the incarnate Word, necessarily remained implicit but not recognized, conscious but not known. In terms of Olivier Rabut's statement, we now have a sure knowledge of the source of the music. Pentecost is the birth of the community invested not only with an experience of the music – that is offered to all – but with the knowledge of its source.

## **2 The Immanent Constitution of Life in God**

A number of recent articles in *Theological Studies*, *Irish Theological Quarterly*, *Lonergan Workshop*, and *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, and perhaps elsewhere, have renewed interest in the four-point systematic-theological hypothesis proposed by Lonergan in the final chapter of his systematic work on the Trinity, a hypothesis which I have already mentioned. The latest volume in the *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, *Early Latin Theology*, includes Lonergan's notes for his contribution to a course on sanctifying grace offered in 1951-52 at the Jesuit Seminary in Toronto, where we find an earlier and in some ways more complete presentation of the same hypothesis.<sup>9</sup> I cannot go into the full hypothesis

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<sup>9</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Early Latin Theology*, vol. 19 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H.

this evening, but must limit myself to the twofold affirmation that sanctifying grace is a created participation in and imitation of divine active spiration, and so of the Father and Son together, and charity is a created participation in and imitation of divine passive spiration, and so of the Holy Spirit. That is, the gift of habitual grace and charity, which in the theology proposed by Lonergan and Crowe is universal, introduces into human living, and in some way into human consciousness itself, a circle of operations<sup>10</sup> through which human beings participate in Trinitarian life. Active spiration *is* the Father and the Son breathing the Holy Spirit, and passive spiration *is* the Holy Spirit breathed by the Father and the Son. If we participate in and imitate these two relations by reason of God's first gift, the Holy Spirit, in fact we participate intimately in divine life and are given created relations to each of the divine Persons. And that participation, those relations, constitute what the two divine missions are all about.

The systematic-theological question is, How can this be? What is the share in divine Trinitarian life that is given us in the gift of grace? How do we participate in and imitate all three divine persons in their intimate relations to one another? And how can this be affirmed as a universal gift?

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Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011) 563-665. See esp. 632-36.

10 For the notion of 'circle of operations,' see Lonergan's appropriation of Jean Piaget's enrichment of the Aristotelian notion of habit, at 488A0DTL050 on the website [www.bernardlonergan.com](http://www.bernardlonergan.com). An English translation by Michael G. Shields will appear in vol. 23 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Early Works on Theological Method 2*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming).

I would invite you, as I speculate on the answer to this question, to keep two more direct and simple quotations in mind. First, there is Lonergan's description of a religious way in which the question of God can arise. There is, says Lonergan, the experienced gift of God's love, 'the experienced fulfilment of our unrestricted thrust to self-transcendence.' This fulfilment, he continues, 'may be objectified as a clouded revelation of absolute intelligence and intelligibility, absolute truth and reality, absolute goodness and holiness.'<sup>11</sup> 'With that objectification' of the gift of God's love, he says, 'there recurs the question of God in a new form. For now it is primarily a question of decision. Will I love him in return, or will I refuse? Will I live out the gift of his love, or will I hold back, turn away, withdraw?'<sup>12</sup>

There is here a pattern of gift and response that constitutes precisely what I wish to elucidate in Trinitarian terms. I'm claiming that this gift and the invitation to respond are universal, even if they become objectified, known, only through divine revelation and principally through the revelation that appears in the mission of the Incarnate Word. And I'm claiming that together they have a Trinitarian structure.

The same pattern of gift and response may be found in the first point in St Ignatius Loyola's 'Contemplation for Attaining the Love of God' at the end of the *Spiritual Exercises*. 'The first point is to call to mind the benefits received, of my creation, redemption, and particular gifts, dwelling with great affection on how much God our Lord has done for me, and how much He has given me of that which He has; and consequently, how much He desires to give me Himself in so far as He can according to His Divine ordinance.' The first point goes on to the response to this *memoria* of the divine gifts: 'Take, O Lord, and receive all my

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<sup>11</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 115-16.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 116.

liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will, whatsoever I have and possess. You have given all these to me; to You, O Lord, I restore them: all are Yours; dispose of them all according to Your will. Give me Your love and Your grace, for this is enough for me.’<sup>13</sup> It is this pattern of gift and response that I am attempting to speak about in Trinitarian terms, and if the Trinitarian speculation at 8:00 on a Friday evening becomes more than you care to absorb, you can do worse than simply entering your own experience of the gift and of the invitation to love in return. For that is what I’m talking about.

In my recent work, I have proposed a theological appropriation of the psychological analogy that Lonergan spells out in great detail in his systematic work on the Trinity. The analogy found in Aquinas and in this relatively early work of Lonergan’s is an analogy from nature, from what we can naturally know, namely, the procession in human consciousness of inner words from acts of understanding and the procession in the same consciousness of acts of love from acts of understanding and the inner word of a judgment of value together.

While Lonergan employs the analogy in order to understand how there can be processions in God, I have tried to employ it in order to understand the immanent constitution of our life in God, when that constitution itself is said to have a Trinitarian structure. How is it possible that the gifts of habitual grace and charity are participations, respectively, in active and passive spiration, and so in the entirety of Trinitarian life? An adaptation of the psychological analogy helps us answer that question. Lonergan’s affirmation that through sanctifying grace and charity we share in active and passive spiration is quite clearly an affirmation of the Trinitarian structure of grace. An adaptation of the psychological analogy that

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13 *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, trans. Henry Keane, S.J. (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1952) § 234.

retains the structure of the analogy but proposes a different starting point enables us to understand how this can be.

I begin with an interpretation and modification of Lonergan's statement in *Method in Theology* that the gift of God's love 'really is sanctifying grace but notionally differs from it.'<sup>14</sup> The modification that I am suggesting has to do not precisely with that statement, which alone is quite fine, but with the fact that in filling out what he means by the statement Lonergan conflates 'the gift of God's love' with 'the dynamic state of being in love with God,' and so has amalgamated what in his earlier work were distinguished as sanctifying grace (the gift of God's love) and charity (the dynamic state of being in love with God as a response to that gift). Lonergan admits this amalgamation in a question-and-answer session at the 1974 Lonergan Workshop at Boston College.<sup>15</sup> I have for nearly twenty years regarded this amalgamation as a slight step backward on Lonergan's part, away from explanatory terms and relations to commonsense description. Obviously, if the hypothesis about active spiration and passive spiration being participated in and imitated by, respectively, sanctifying grace and charity is to be preserved, then just as active spiration and passive spiration are really distinct relations in God, so sanctifying grace and charity must be really distinct bases of really distinct relations in us, in created grace, and they must be accounted for as such. I am suggesting that there are distinct special basic relations in human consciousness that correspond to the realities named in metaphysical terms 'sanctifying grace'

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14 Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 107.

15 This remark was made in the fifth question-and-answer session at the 1974 Boston College Lonergan Workshop. The recording of this session, restored by Greg Lauzon, may be found on the website [www.bernardlonergan.com](http://www.bernardlonergan.com) at 81500A0E070, with a corresponding transcription at 81500DTE070.

and ‘the habit of charity,’ and I’m suggesting that those are the gift of God’s love and loving God in return.

The term ‘special basic relations’ is something that I add to the following crucial methodological statement in *Method in Theology*:

... the 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.<sup>16</sup>

The terms ‘general’ and ‘special’ in this passage refer to categories that are shared by theology with other disciplines (general) and categories that are peculiar to theology (special). But is it not anomalous that in this passage we find general basic terms and general basic relations but only special basic terms, not special basic relations? What I am suggesting is that this lacuna is filled by acknowledging that special basic terms name both sanctifying grace and charity, transposed respectively into ‘the gift of God’s love’ and ‘the dynamic state of being in love with God,’ and that ‘special basic relations’ are constituted as the relations between these two special basic terms, relations that are created participations in and imitations of the divine relations of active and passive spiration.

This hypothesis first arose for me when I tried to transpose the first thesis in Lonergan’s ‘De ente supernaturali’ into the language of religious interiority. The first part of that thesis reads, ‘There exists a created communication of the divine

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16 Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 343.

nature.’ The thesis goes on to speak of that communication as a created, proportionate, and remote principle whereby there are operations in us through which we attain God as God is in God’s own being. Lonergan’s exposition of that thesis, composed in 1946, is entirely metaphysical. Not once does it address the question, ‘What *in terms of consciousness* would a created communication of the divine nature be?’ In fact, he does not really begin earnestly to address such a question until the years leading up to *Method in Theology* when he speaks of the gift of God’s love and the dynamic state of being in love with God. But in my view it is unfortunate that his conflation or amalgamation of the respective meanings of those two terms does away with the valuable distinction of sanctifying grace and charity that is affirmed in ‘De ente supernaturali’ and above all in the hypothesis about our participation in the distinct Trinitarian relations of active and passive spiration.

Such has been the issue that has driven some of my work for the past twenty years, and all I can do here is share with you the results of pursuing that question, as these have emerged to date, results that would specify the Trinitarian character of grace. As I do so, I suggest you recall the two quotations that I presented for your consideration: from Lonergan on the gift and the invitation to respond, and from Ignatius’s first point in the Contemplation for Attaining the Love of God.

With regard to the quotation from Lonergan, without the objectification through revelation of the gift of God’s love, the gift still is given, and the question for decision still arises, most often quite tacitly, even ineffably, and it may quite accurately be objectified by those who know what the gift is in such terms as ‘Will I love in return for the gift of love that has been given?’ Even without being so objectified, the relations of giftedness and invitation to return the gift constitute, I propose, the special basic relations that may be found as a universal constant in the order of grace in human consciousness, relations that Christian theology can

identify as created participations in and imitations of the divine relations of active and passive spiration, respectively. These relations are a conscious share in Trinitarian life offered universally to humankind. The mission of the Word raises them from being merely conscious to being also known.

I insist, then, that we need to distinguish the gift of God's love and the dynamic state of being in love with God. Then we can correlate the gift of God's love with our participation in and imitation of active spiration through sanctifying grace, and the dynamic state of being in love with God with our participation in and imitation of passive spiration through charity. Being loved by God and loving God in return constitute the special basic relations, the immanent constitution of life in God, the participation in active and passive spiration, the transposition into religious interiority of the categories 'sanctifying grace' and 'the habit of charity.'

Sanctifying grace was called in medieval theology 'gratia gratum faciens,' grace that makes us pleasing to God in a unique way, such that we are introduced to a share in divine life through that grace. It is a gift of being on the receiving end of God's love. That gift may be for some an intensely personal experience, whereas for others it is known primarily from recollection of the difference it has made in one's life. Such recollection, I would propose, may give us the key to the *Trinitarian* nature of the gift and the response. So far, there are only two elements: gift and response. What is Trinitarian about that? The element of recollection in our own experience, as we recall with Ignatius the gifts given us in grace, enables us to return in theological reflection to the first great exposition of a psychological analogy, that of Augustine, who suggests that what he calls *memoria* is a possible analogue for the Father. *Memoria* for Augustine is the state in which the mind, *mens*, finds itself. Augustine's *memoria* as employed in Trinitarian theology is a graced disposition or self-taste, a graced way of 'how one finds oneself' in the total summation of one's life and deeds: one finds oneself on the receiving end of

unconditional love. It is captured perfectly, precisely as memory, in the first point of St Ignatius Loyola's 'Contemplation for Attaining the Love of God,' where it is called 'calling to mind.'

Such a graced *memoria* is for Augustine a fitting analogue in the order of grace for the divine Father. But such a graced recollection of one's own giftedness seeks expression, and the first expression is an ineffable judgment of value, an initially ineffable 'Yes,' 'Thank you,' a tacit inner word that precisely as ineffable judgment of value is a knowledge born of the gift of love, and so is faith in the sense in which Lonergan uses that word in *Method in Theology*: faith as distinct from the beliefs of particular religious traditions, a faith that can be found in many religious traditions, since the gift of God's love recollected in *memoria* is itself offered to all. I would like to suggest that that faith born of being on the receiving end of unqualified love, precisely as the inner word of a graced judgment of value, is the created term of an invisible mission of the divine Word, a mission of the Word that is just as universal as, because inseparable from, the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit. *Memoria* and word, being loved and faith, participation in Father and Son together, are the created participation in and imitation of active spiration that a theoretical theology called sanctifying grace, and what they breathe, what they spirate, is charity, the love in return that coalesces over a lifetime into a habitual loving that may fittingly be called being in love with God with one's whole mind and heart and soul and strength and loving one's neighbor as oneself. Charity, as breathed simultaneously from being loved and the faith that acknowledges this gift, is a created participation in and imitation of the passive spiration that is the Holy Spirit, and so is a created relation of love to the Son and Father, Word and Origin, from which the gift proceeds. In Christians the love in return takes the form of companionship with the incarnate Word as he leads the children of adoption back to the Father in eschatological hope in this life and in

beatific knowing in the life to come. In others it may take the form of a love of wisdom and a purified transcendence that may be found in one form or another in various religious traditions.

Such a theology of the divine missions vastly expands the range of data relevant to Christian theology. I have argued in a recent paper, 'Functional Specialties for a World Theology',<sup>17</sup> that if Crowe's position on the universality of the mission of the Holy Spirit is correct, then the data relevant for Christian theology include all the data on the religious living of human beings everywhere and at all times. In terms of Lonergan's functional specializations, if all the data on human religious living, whether that living be explicit or compact, are now to be made available for Christian theology itself, they are also to be interpreted in accord with the critical-realist hermeneutic theory presented in both chapter 17 of *Insight* and chapter 7 of *Method*, and the relevant history for Christian theology itself expands to include the religious history of all of humanity. That such a proposal does not mean the collapse of theology into positivist religious studies is guaranteed by accepting the functional specialization of theological tasks; for then, beyond research, interpretation, and history, which is where religious studies would stop, there remains, in the first phase, the dialectic that would mediate the differences by discerning the presence of the Holy Spirit in the positive data, and then there is the normative subject, the concrete universal moving the whole of theology to a second phase; and in that second phase there will emerge vastly expanded functional specialties of categories, doctrines, systematics, and communications. The result will be a vast collaboration constructing what we may

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17 Now available as Essay 36 in *Essays in Systematic Theology: An E-book*, on [www.lonerganresource.com](http://www.lonerganresource.com), and scheduled for publication as well in *Lonergan Workshop 24*.

call a world theology or a theology for a world church, a theology that takes its stand on the theological and ecclesial doctrine of the universal mission and gift of the Holy Spirit, and that applies the methodological doctrine of functional specialization to the task of mediating from data to results an entire worldwide community of men and women receiving and responding to what Christians know as the third divine Person, the Holy Spirit of God, proceeding Love in the Trinity poured out in the hearts of all by the gift of the triune God to all. The content of all eight (or, I would suggest, nine) functional specialties is expanded vastly if we take our stand on Crowe's theological doctrine.

Such are, then, what in my title I call 'Trinitarian Elements in a Theology of Religion.'

### **3 The Trinity in History**

In 1975, Jean-Marc Laporte and Tad Dunne edited a Festschrift in honor of Frederick Crowe's sixtieth birthday. It was entitled *Trinification of the World*. The title is a reminder that participation in divine life is historical and social, not just individual. In his Chancellor's lecture Fr Crowe picked up on this theme. In response to what he presumed would be an obvious question, namely, What happens to evangelization if what we are saying is true? Crowe insists that evangelization is no more a secondary matter for theology with this new approach than it was a secondary matter for God that the eternal Word should take flesh and be born of the Virgin Mary. The outer word is constitutive of friendship with God, just as the avowal of love between two human beings is constitutive of their being in love. In Lonergan's own words, 'as much as ever, one needs the word – the word of tradition that has accumulated religious wisdom, the word of fellowship that unites those that share the gift of God's love, the word of the gospel that

announces that God has loved us first and, in the fullness of time, has revealed that love in Christ crucified, dead, and risen.’<sup>18</sup> Still, Crowe is aware that our approach to the task of evangelization will be modified if the basic thesis of his paper is accepted.

Crowe would begin a theology of evangelization by addressing the problem of evil, which is the issue that Lonergan addresses in the final chapter of *Insight*. ‘... if God is good, then there is not only a problem of evil, but also a solution,’<sup>19</sup> and that solution is revealed in the life, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The solution Lonergan calls the Law of the Cross, at the heart of which is the self-sacrificing charity that returns good for evil. That revelation, in fact, articulates what the prior mission of the Holy Spirit was about all along, for such charity flows from the gift of God’s love that is the Holy Spirit and that is revealed in the mission of the Word. Genuine evangelization promotes what I have termed a soteriological differentiation of religious consciousness. God’s revelation in Jesus establishes this clarity regarding the solution to the problem of evil, even if the solution is present wherever the gift of the Holy Spirit has been gratefully received.

I believe, however, that the theology of history to which Lonergan’s position on the Law of the Cross contributes, a theology that may be summed up in the shorthand expression that Lonergan frequently uses, namely, progress-decline-redemption, where redemption comes through fidelity to the Law of the Cross, may be further enriched when we turn to the implications for history of Lonergan’s

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18 Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 113.

19 Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, vol. 3 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 716.

scale of values: vital, social, cultural, personal, religious.<sup>20</sup> I have expanded on this claim in *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, and in the present context can only call attention to the fact that the immanent constitution of life in God as defined through the special basic relations of gift and response constitutes the realm of religious values in that scale. From above downwards, then, the gift of God's love and charity's acceptance and response increase the probability of integrity at the level of personal value, that is, at the level of 'the person in his [or her] self-transcendence, as loving and being loved, as originator of values in [oneself] and in [one's] milieu, as an inspiration and invitation to others to do likewise.'<sup>21</sup> The further integrity of cultural values, of the meanings and values that inform our ways of living, depends on a community of persons striving for authenticity and willing to accept their collective responsibility for the present and future well-being of their cultural communities and today of all humankind. The transformation of cultural values at both the everyday and the reflexive levels of culture – and here is where the rubber hits the road in terms of social grace – are the condition of possibility of justice in the economic and political order and of the transformed intersubjective spontaneities required for peaceful living.<sup>22</sup> And only these transformed social values will guarantee the equitable distribution of vital goods to the entire community of God's family: precisely the sort of thing that the 'Occupy' movements are calling for. The insistence of liberation theology on the preferential option for the poor, an insistence reflected in various ways, some muted and some quite explicit, in magisterial teaching, is in this way linked to a

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20 For the scale of values, see Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 31-32.

21 Ibid. 32.

22 See Robert M. Doran, 'Social Grace and the Mission of the Word,' and 'Social Grace,' Essay 35 in the e-book *Essays in Systematic Theology*.

full and rich Trinitarian theology and Christology, so that it can take its rightful place in the church's continuing proclamation of God's victory in Jesus.<sup>23</sup> I hope that this reminder of the social implications through the scale of values of a Trinitarian theology of grace is a fitting contribution to meeting Crowe's question regarding the future of evangelization in a world whose various religious traditions are acknowledged in their positive moments as the fruit of the gift of the one whom Christians acknowledge as the third Person of the Blessed Trinity. I do not believe that evangelization can be purely individual. I think the litmus test for genuine evangelization is the integrity of the full scale of values, where God's gift of divine love proceeds through converted subjects to become social grace in transformed cultural values and revised social structures so as to guarantee the equitable distribution of vital goods to all the members of God's family.

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23 See Rohan M. Curnow, 'History, Society, and the Hermeneutics of the Poor: A Preliminary Exploration of the Understanding of the Preferential Option for the Poor in Robert Doran's *Theology and the Dialectics of History*,' *METHOD: Journal of Lonergan Studies*, new series 1:2 (2010) 103-23, and more fully Curnow's dissertation, 'Bernard Lonergan and the Preferential Option for the Poor: Integral Conversion, Liberation Hermeneutics, and the Mission of the Church,' Regis College, Toronto School of Theology, 2011, where the relation between the preferential option as affirmed by liberation theology and as affirmed in magisterial teaching is carefully explored. I would also indicate that in a lecture delivered at Marquette University earlier this month, John Dadosky made the valuable suggestion of a link between fidelity to the option for the poor and the invisible mission of the Word in history. I regard Dadosky's suggestion as complementing what I have said about that invisible mission.