

Essays in Systematic Theology 51:
The Structure of Systematic Theology (2)¹

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I wish to begin by thanking Darren Dias for initiating a very exciting and promising venture: the collaborative construction of a systematic theology. It was after I delivered a shorter and preliminary version of the present paper at the 2012 convention of the Catholic Theological Society of America that Darren proposed the project of a collaboratively written systematic theology.² The theology that I suggested in that paper would be based in Bernard Lonergan's vision both of functional specialization and of the role of systematics in the fuller theological enterprise, and also in the efforts that I have made over the years to begin such a project. In the same paper I insisted that the systematics that I was envisioning could be written only collaboratively, that no one single person could do it. But I had no idea that someone would take the initiative to bring it about this quickly until Darren approached me and convincingly laid out the case that it was now time to move forward, that in fact the project had already started, and that all that was needed was to gather a team to keep it going.

Almost simultaneously, Neil Ormerod of Australian Catholic University had begun to organize his collaborators in Australia to do precisely the same thing. In thinking about this, I'm reminded of how Newton and Leibniz, independently of each other, almost simultaneously discovered calculus. There was something already in the air. Perhaps the same is true today. And as a result people are working on the same project on two fronts, and one of the fruits of the present colloquium, I hope, will be to bring these two initiatives into closer collaboration with each other. As you know, Neil Ormerod will be joining us live by Skype tomorrow afternoon.

¹ Delivered at the Colloquium on Doing Systematic Theology in a Multi-religious World, Marquette University, November 7, 2013.

² An audio recording of the St. Louis lecture can be found on the website www.lonerganresource.com, under Events/Conferences/CTSA 2012.

I will address today the following points: (1) the issue of what a systematics based in Lonergan's work would be, (2) some of the contributions that I attempted to add in *What Is Systematic Theology?*³ (3) pneumatology, the psychological analogy, and the multi-religious context, (4) a possible sequence of theological topics, (5) social grace, and (6) random questions about the proposed order of systematic topics.

1 Lonergan's Understanding of Systematics

Once he completed and published *Method in Theology*, Lonergan did not show us what he thought a systematic theology based in that book would be; that is to say, he did not turn his attention to writing a contemporary systematics, in whole or in part. An oral tradition has it that he was debating whether to turn his attention to Christology or to return to the extensive work on macroeconomics that he had begun in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and that a chance remark of Gustavo Gutierrez at a meeting held at Notre Dame was at least part of what motivated him to choose the latter option. To a certain extent those of us who frequently take our lead from him are on our own when it comes to composing a systematic theology based in his work. Moreover, for at least some of us who root our own systematic work in Lonergan, the chapter on systematics in *Method* is the most disappointing chapter in the entire book. Lonergan's earlier work in systematics, represented especially in the massive Latin treatises on the Trinity and the Incarnation written at the Gregorian University while he was teaching there, clearly belongs primarily to what he calls the second stage of meaning, where meaning is controlled by theory, theory is regulated by logic, and metaphysics provides the general theological categories in relation to which the realities peculiar to theology are to be understood. In *Method* he decisively moves beyond that stage of meaning, not of course by neglecting theory, logic, and metaphysics but by insisting on appropriated interiority as the only ground that makes metaphysics verifiable and as the basis for transposing theologies based in metaphysics into what the contemporary era

³ Robert M. Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

requires. But he does not himself *do* much systematics from that basis. His systematic treatises are metaphysical theology brought to a point of perfection, brought perhaps as far as that kind of theology can go and has ever been brought. Lonergan's metaphysics is very subtle and refined: this kind of trinitarian theology and Christology has never been brought to a greater refinement and possibly cannot be. Much of what appears in those treatises has to be brought forward in transposed fashion into the new era. In some instances, for example in the use of the psychological analogy for understanding the divine processions, he tells us what Aquinas really meant in a manner far more explicit than is found in Aquinas himself; and yet his elaboration can be verified by reading the text of Aquinas in the light of his interpretation. His Latin treatises exhibit a few permanent new achievements, one of which I will build on later in this paper. But they do not mediate between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion, and specifically of Christian faith, in that matrix. They pay very little attention to the cultural situation in which they are written, beyond the narrow horizon of the Gregorian University in the late 1950s and early 1960s – and that was indeed a very narrow horizon, the horizon of a theology that was dying. The treatises seem indifferent to addressing a larger situation. Clearly, a systematics rooted in *Method in Theology* would in many ways be quite different from Lonergan's efforts in that functional specialty. It would be historically located. It would be a genetic outgrowth from the best in the tradition of metaphysical theologies. And it would acknowledge that it will itself be followed by a further genetic sequence of systematic theologies as the cultural situations with which systematics mediates Christian faith themselves undergo change, whether for better or for worse. In a word, it would be invested with historical mindedness.

Nonetheless, at least four permanently valid methodological emphases are clear from Lonergan's own work in a theoretical systematics, and I have insisted they must be retained as we move into a new era.

The first is that the principal function of systematics is to present on the level of contemporary questions a hypothetical, imperfect, analogical, obscure, and gradually developing

understanding of the mysteries of faith, in other words, the kind of theology stressed and applauded by the First Vatican Council. (The Council, of course, seems to think that this is the *only* thing that theology does, whereas for Lonergan is one of *eight* interrelated theological tasks.)

The second permanently valid methodological emphasis is that the first and central problems of systematics are those mysteries that have received dogmatic or creedal status in the church, particularly the Trinity, the Incarnation, the gift of the Holy Spirit in grace, and the promise of beatific knowing and loving in the eternal life of the resurrection.

The third is that systematic understanding must proceed as much as possible in the *ordo doctrinae*, the order of teaching, as contrasted with the order of discovery. The order of teaching, as Thomas makes clear in the *Summa theologiae* – that work of his which embodies this order more fully than any other – begins with that reality which, once it is understood, renders possible the understanding of everything else.

And the fourth emphasis is that an effort must be made to keep the understanding explanatory rather than purely descriptive, but, again, explanatory on the level of our time. Thus, while the basic terms and relations have a technical meaning that goes behind what can be had either from a simple inspection or an erudite exegesis of the original sources, nonetheless they are not metaphysical but rather name the basic realities discovered in interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness, from which the remainder of the categories are derived, including preeminently metaphysical categories.

While these emphases raise questions to which I have drawn attention in *What Is Systematic Theology?* answering the questions will not negate these four emphases but rather strengthen and nuance them considerably.

Finally, to these four emphases from Lonergan's systematic-theological work may be added two further points that emerge after his breakthrough to functional specialization: (1) the insistence that a contemporary systematic theology will take the form of a theological theory of history, an insistence that emerges explicitly in Lonergan's work in 1965, and (2) the persuasion

that is increasingly clear in his post-*Method* writings that the multi-religious character of our world sets the stage, partly defines the cultural matrix, for a contemporary systematics. Along with modern science, the emergence of historical consciousness, and the vagaries of modern and contemporary philosophy, the multi-religious element is constitutive of the cultural matrix with which a contemporary systematics mediates Christian faith.

So, to sum up the first point in this paper we may say that systematics is an effort to provide an analogical, imperfectly explanatory understanding of the mysteries of faith, of the realities named in Christian constitutive meaning, and to do so as a theology of history, a theology grounded in interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness, and a theology invested with a profound sensitivity to the multi-religious context.

2 The Contributions of *What Is Systematic Theology?*

It was with the conviction that the chapter on systematics in *Method in Theology* did not do enough to tell us what a methodical systematics would be that I wrote *What Is Systematic Theology?* I intended the book to be by and large an elaboration on chapter 13 in *Method in Theology*, an elaboration based in the point that I just made regarding history. Lonergan had affirmed as early as 1965 that systematics is to be a theological theory of history, that the mediated object of systematics is *Geschichte*, not the history that is written, but the history that is written about. Thus each of the major elements among the mysteries of faith that systematics is charged to understand and elaborate must be expressed in categories that indicate the significance *for human history* of the realities named in Christian constitutive meanings: God, Trinity, the Holy Spirit, the Incarnation, revelation, creation, anthropology, original sin, personal and social sin, redemption, sacraments, church, social grace, praxis, resurrection, eternal life, and so on.⁴

⁴ See below, note 11.

One way to summarize what I tried to add in *What Is Systematic Theology?* is to raise the question of theological categories. In an earlier book, *Theology and the Dialectics of History*,⁵ I attempted to set forth a heuristics of history in terms of Lonergan's scale of values and the dialectical structure of the human person, of culture, and of the social order. The scale of values and the dialectics of subject, culture, and community are presented as the principal general categories (those shared with other disciplines) in the systematics I am envisioning. The integral functioning of the scale of values constitutes the structure of the situation that theology would evoke at any given time, the manner in which we may speak of the reign of God in any cultural and social situation. It is the reign of God that a Christian theology based in the One who came proclaiming the advent of that reign should be intent on catalyzing in the realm of human meanings and values.

Moreover, in *What Is Systematic Theology?* I drew on a hypothesis that appears at the very end of Lonergan's systematic treatise on the Trinity in order to establish the theological context of the special categories, those peculiar to theology. That hypothesis represents the permanent theological achievement in Lonergan's metaphysical theology that I referred to earlier in this paper. It is so significant that Neil Ormerod has called it the most important theological statement since the work of Aquinas. It links the four divine relations – paternity, filiation, active spiration, and passive spiration – with four created imitations of and participations in those relations: respectively, in Scholastic terms that need transposition into religious interiority to the extent that this is possible, these are the grace of union or secondary act of existence of the Incarnation, which names the created base of the created relation of the assumed humanity of Jesus to the eternal divine Word; the light of glory, which is the consequent condition of the gift of beatific knowing and loving, and the created base of a created relation to the Father; and both sanctifying grace and the habit or disposition or circle of operations that constitutes charity, which are the distinct consequent conditions of the gift of the Holy Spirit and participation in

⁵ Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990, 2001).

trinitarian life rooted in the gift, the respective bases of created relations first to the Holy Spirit and then to the Son and the Father.⁶

The theory of history expressed in *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, and the hypothesis that links the divine relations with the divine missions, together constitute what I call the unified field structure of systematic theology. *What Is Systematic Theology?* lays out that structure in detail, especially in chapter 7.

Thus, this proposal about systematics, relying as it does on a hypothesis that links trinitarian relations with the structure of created grace, insists that systematics has to begin with the Trinity. The commonplace understanding of Lonergan is that everything begins with the human subject. This, I think, is a profound misunderstanding. *Method* (not just the book but the task) begins with the subject. But systematic theology begins with God. It proceeds in the order of teaching, of synthesis, of composition, and in that order one begins with the understanding of that which will make it possible to understand everything else. For Christian faith that is the doctrine of God. Systematics has a structure analogous to the procedures of a science like chemistry. Chemistry textbooks do not begin by narrating the history of the discovery of the periodic table. They begin with the periodic table itself. In similar fashion, the functional specialty 'systematics' does not begin with the history of the discovery of Christian constitutive meaning. It begins with the hypothetical understanding of that reality or set of realities that grounds the understanding of everything else in the discipline. That reality is the triune God.

We begin, then, as Thomas did in the first 43 questions of the *Summa theologiae*, with the triune God, or more specifically with God one and three. However, while Thomas also began with the triune God, to say that systematics begins with the Trinity does not mean that we are simply to repeat those first 43 questions, however brilliant and permanently valid they may be. I dare say that almost everything in those 43 questions is somehow to be brought forward in a

⁶ The hypothesis may be found in Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009) 470-73.

contemporary systematics. But our context is not Thomas's. It was in terms of modernity that Lonergan understood the massive cultural shift that impressed on him the need for a thorough exploration of theological method. He spoke of that context as determined by modern science, modern historical consciousness, and modern philosophy. To these cultural factors that constitute modernity we must add, some forty years later, the deference to the other that constitutes the postmodern phenomenon, and so in particular both the interreligious context within which all Christian theology must be conducted from this point forward and the vast call that both God and humanity are uttering for social and economic justice and in fact for a massive transformation of the global social infrastructure.

In this context, the triune God with which a contemporary systematics begins is a God whose gift of grace is offered to all women and men at every time and place. Today that offer also calls for the transformation of cultural meanings and values and the elaboration of social structures that deliver the goods of the earth in an equitable fashion to all. The Incarnation of the Word of God is best understood in our time as the revelation of that universal offer of grace and of the demands that come with it. Once meaning is acknowledged, with the help of the hermeneutical heirs of modern philosophical developments, to be constitutive of the real world in which human beings live and know and choose and love, a soteriology can be phrased at least partly in revelational terms, so that the introduction of divine meaning into history not only cognitively but also effectively and constitutively is redemptive of that history and of the subjects and communities that are both formed by that history and form its further advance in turn. This redemptive grace has to move to the transformation of the everyday cultural values and social structures that constitute the infrastructure of human living.

With this in mind the Trinity with which I *begin* systematic theological reflection, as is manifest in the subsequent book *The Trinity in History*, volume 1, *Missions and Processions*,⁷ is the Trinity with which Lonergan *ends* his book on the Trinity. The missions of the Son and the

⁷ Robert M. Doran, *The Trinity in History*, vol. 1: *Missions and Processions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

Holy Spirit are the eternal processions of the Son and the Holy Spirit joined to created external and historical terms that are the consequent conditions of those processions being also missions: the grace of union or secondary act of existence of the Incarnation, in the case of the mission of the Son, and sanctifying grace and charity, in the case of the mission of the Holy Spirit. The Trinity with which a contemporary systematics begins is thus a Trinity whose missions are acknowledged from the beginning as identical with the immanent processions joined to created external terms. An elaboration of the Trinitarian structure of divine mission would thus be part of systematic theology's equivalent to a periodic table. As the periodic table stands at the beginning of an exposition of chemistry, so this elaboration would stand at the very beginning of a systematic theology, along with the other part of the unified field structure, the ongoing and developing theory of history to which *Theology and the Dialectics of History* contributes. The universal mission of the Holy Spirit, together with the universal and invisible mission of the divine Word, constitute the first reality in the realm of religious values in the integral scale of values, and by and large the systematics that I envision would articulate the relation of those missions and of the consequent and revealing visible mission of the Word in the Incarnation to realities at the other levels of value: personal, cultural, social, and vital.

3 Pneumatology, the Psychological Analogy, and the Multi-religious Context

If systematics begins, as I am suggesting, with the Trinity in history, a theology of the Trinity in history has to begin with the mission of the Holy Spirit. Why? Because that is where God begins as God enters human history. The visible mission of the Word is, among other things, the revelation of what God has always been doing in the invisible missions of the Holy Spirit and the Word. The visible mission of the Word is first for us. But a systematics must begin with what is first in itself, and so with the invisible mission of the Holy Spirit and the conjoined invisible mission of the divine Word.

Here I follow and develop Frederick Crowe's major paper, 'Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions,'⁸ to understand the visible mission of the Word in the context of the universal offer of divine healing and elevating grace. The offer of the gift of God's love, that is, the gift of the Holy Spirit, effects the inchoate supernatural fulfilment of a natural desire for union with God, and a pledge of the beatific knowing and loving that is our supernatural destiny. The gift of the Holy Spirit is thus not only first but also universal. The hypothesis with which I begin thus enables us to understand what a metaphysical theology called sanctifying grace as the sheer gift of the unrestricted love of God offered both *to* all and *as* the love with which we ourselves are invited to love.

The elaboration of this gift enables us to develop a new variant, I believe, on the Augustinian-Thomist psychological analogy for understanding the divine processions. As the gift of God's love comes to constitute the conscious *memoria* or self-possession in which the human person is present to himself or herself, it gives rise to a set of judgments of value that constitute a universalist faith, a faith that assents to and gives thanks for the gift, a faith that in fact is the created term of an invisible and universal mission of the Word. Together this self-presence in *memoria* and its word of Yes in faith breathe charity, the love of the Givers and a love of all people and of the entire universe in loving the Givers of the gift. The structure of grace is Trinitarian, where *memoria* as the state in which *mens*, mind, interiority finds itself provides the analogue for the Father, the proceeding word that with Lonergan can be called faith provides the analogue for the Son, and the love that proceeds from *memoria* and faith provides the analogue for the Holy Spirit. But the terms of the invisible missions of the Son and the Spirit, namely, faith and charity, are more than just terms; they are created imitations of and participations in trinitarian life.

The question arises, of course, about the status of the *memoria* or self-possession that I am suggesting is the analogue for the Father. Does such an attribution not demand that there be

⁸ 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) 324-43.

acknowledged a mission of the Father? And since that is impossible, since mission is identical with procession and the Father proceeds from no one and so can be sent by no one, does this analogy not collapse? The reason that it does not is found in Lonergan's interpretation and use of Romans 5.5: it is *through* the Holy Spirit that has been given to us that God's love – the love that Thomas specifies as *notionaliter diligere*, the Father's own love – has been poured into our hearts. *That* love, as both love *for us* and love that has become *our* love, is first in the order of the processions that constitute grace, in a manner analogous to the Father, who is first in the order of divine processions, the origin and source of the entire Trinitarian life. And that same passage from Romans illuminates further the place of the Father in this structure, for the passage begins with the words 'hope does not disappoint us': hope does not disappoint us, *because* God's love has been poured forth into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. If charity proceeds from the sheer gift of divine love and from the faith that is the knowledge born of the gift of that love, charity also carries the recipient of the gift back to the Givers: to the Word in companionship and in the love of wisdom, and to the Father in hope. The Father is the uncreated term of a created hope that is born of faith and charity.

I am here using Christian language to talk of something that I am convinced is universal. This emphasis on the invisible missions of the Holy Spirit and of the Word introduces multi-religious advances on the theological situation, and these will change everything in that situation. They will do so in ways that are enriching but at the same time for many anxiety-producing. They will also do so in ways that are as yet unforeseen. We do not know what God has in mind. As Frederick Crowe has insisted, there is no answer as yet to the question of the final relationship of Christianity to the other world religions. We are working that out. God wants us to work it out. It is a set of future contingent realities, and nothing true can be said about them now. There will be no answer to that question until we have worked it out, and we are at the very beginning of that elaboration.⁹ I believe we will know progressively whether we are working it

⁹ See the concluding comments in Frederick Crowe, *Christ and History* (Ottawa: Novalis, 2005).

out as God wants only on the basis of a discernment that will follow and amplify the basic directives that have been bequeathed to us through the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius. Discernment, both personal and communal, will be central to the unfolding of the theological enterprise as we move into an uncharted and uncertain future.

With this in mind I have suggested in more recent work that the functional specialties in which Lonergan elaborates the overall structure of theology, a structure in which systematics is but one set of tasks among many, need to be considered as functional specialties for a global or world theology. The functional specialties, which I number as nine rather than eight, are really functional specialties for a vast expansion of theology, and of every functional specialty in theology, beyond what even Lonergan had explicitly in mind.¹⁰ The issue has to do with the data for theology, and if the theology of universal invisible missions of Spirit and Word is correct, then the data relevant for Christian theology become all the data on the religious living of men and women at every age, in every religion, and in every culture. For the one whom Christians call the Holy Spirit is at work everywhere, and not simply in the post-resurrection, Pentecostal context of Christian faith, where a visible or palpable mission of the Spirit occurs; and the word that issues from the gift of divine love, as a participation in the divine Word proceeding from the Father, is also present everywhere. The prologue to John's Gospel expresses this as clearly as it has ever been said: the Word that was with God and that was God from the beginning and that became flesh in Jesus of Nazareth is the true light that enlightens everyone. It is quickly becoming the responsibility of Christians to discern the workings of the Holy Spirit and the voices of the Word on a universal scale, and in theology that responsibility will take the form of interpreting the religious data, narrating what has been going forward in the religious history of peoples, dialectically and dialogically discerning what is of God from what is not, discriminating genuine transcendence from deviated transcendence in the various religions of humankind including Christianity and Catholicism, and taking one's stand on what is of God wherever it

¹⁰ These points are treated in some detail in *Missions and Processions*.

may be found, articulating this in positions that it is hoped all can accept, and understanding the realities affirmed in such judgments. In all my work on this task, I have insisted that the dynamics of the charity that returns good for evil, in Christian terms the Law of the Cross, will be central to that discernment of all religious data.

4 Theological Loci or Topics

On this reading, then, the first development beyond Trinitarian theology is pneumatology as informing the theology of grace, and the second is Christology. These three together – Trinity, grace, and Christ, in that order, which is harmonious with the sequence of topics in Thomas's *Summa theologiae* – constitute what, following Lonergan, I call the contemporary dogmatic-theological context in terms of which there are to be understood the realities named in the other special categories of systematic theology. The dogmatic-theological context is constituted by those elements of Christian doctrine whose basic terms and relations have been established in the course of doctrinal and theological development in such a way that the parameters around the further possible development of the relevant doctrines are already well set. With Lonergan I would affirm that this is true of Trinitarian and Christological doctrine and of the doctrine of grace. I would propose very briefly that the order, the *ordo doctrinae*, of the other theological topics is the following – and let me insist that this is subject to change as the collaborative project goes forward: revelation, creation, anthropology, original sin, personal and social sin, redemption, sacraments, church, social grace, praxis, resurrection, and eternal life.¹¹ I will come back to this at the end, but first I wish to situate these theological topics in the context of a grace that is not only individual but also and especially social.

¹¹ In the discussion that followed in the Colloquium on the day after this paper was presented, this order was changed to: God, Trinity, Holy Spirit, Revelation, Incarnation, Creation, Anthropology, Sin (original, personal, and social), Social Grace, Redemption, Resurrection, Sacraments, Church, Eternal Life, and Praxis.

5 Social Grace

While Trinitarian theology, pneumatology, and Christology may formulate the dogmatic-theological context in terms of which the other topics are understood, they do not provide by themselves the unified field structure adequate to the unfolding of the understanding of Christian faith on the level of our time. To this dogmatic-theological context, which is concerned exclusively with the special theological categories, must be added a theory of history, one that is theologically and philosophically informed and that will enable theological minds to generate not only the special categories that name specifically theological realities but also general categories shared with other disciplines. Because the realities named in the special categories are understood in relation to those named in the general categories generated in a theory of history, systematic theological meaning is inherently social in its import and relevance. Its objective is not only the understanding, but also, through the functional specialty ‘communications,’ the promotion, of the reign of God in history. That reign of God I understand in terms of the integral functioning of the scale of values, where, from above, the love of God (religious values, the gift of the Holy Spirit and more fully the trinitarian structure of grace itself) is the condition of possibility of the emergence of persons in integrity (personal values). Such persons in turn are the originators of genuine cultural values, at both the infrastructural or every-day and the superstructural levels of culture. Cultural values condition the justice of the social order, and a just social order is the condition of the equitable distribution of vital goods. As systematics moves from the articulation of the trinitarian analogy, pneumatology, and Christology to the derivative theological topics – revelation, creation, anthropology, original sin, personal and social sin, redemption, sacraments, church, praxis, resurrection, and eternal life – the function of grace as social becomes ever more significant. I have inserted ‘social grace’ as a topic between ‘church’ and ‘praxis.’¹² The scale of values provides the basic heuristic structure, I propose, for answering the question that Lonergan raised in his important paper ‘Natural Right and Historical

¹² Again, see note 11.

Mindedness,' namely, How are we to understand and promote *collective* responsibility?¹³

Moreover, systematics as I have understood it is inherently and intrinsically a social undertaking. Social grace can be incarnate in the theological community itself, and wherever it so functions it is a participation in the invisible mission of the Word.

More can and must be said on this topic of social grace, but for the moment I must simply refer those interested to the chapter called 'Social Grace and the Mission of the Word' in the first volume of *The Trinity in History*.

6 Random Questions about the Proposed Order of Systematic Topics

I close by addressing several questions related to my proposed order of systematic topics.

6.1 Sacraments and Church

First, there is the relation of sacramental theology and ecclesiology both to the other topics and to each other. This is a question that I had to address in the CTSA version of this paper, where sacramental theology was the focus of the entire convention. And so I treat it first here.

While the structure of the systematics that I have suggested places sacramental theology and ecclesiology after, and dependent upon, Trinitarian theology, pneumatology, Christology, the theology of revelation, creation, anthropology, original sin, personal and social sin, and redemption, this obviously does not mean that sacramental theologians and ecclesiologists either have to do all these other things first or wait until others have done them before they turn their attention to what they are really interested in. But it does ask that sacramental theology and ecclesiology be self-consciously situated in the dogmatic-theological context and unified field structure that are set by these other and prior considerations. When that happens, the theology of the church will become, I believe, a theology of a community on mission in collaboration with

¹³ See Bernard Lonergan, 'Natural Right and Historical Mindedness,' *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1985) 169-83.

the divine missions and serving God as the Incarnate Word served the Father, that is, as the embodiment of the deutero-Isaian servant in the face of social and cultural distortion and injustice. As others have suggested, ‘*communio*’ may function as a helpful symbol for the church *ad intra*, but Pope Francis has made it abundantly clear that a church that is exclusively concerned with its relations *ad intra* is a distorted community. In *Theology and the Dialectics of History* I opted for the model of the church as Servant of God on mission, and I continue to hold for that model as paramount. Sacraments will be understood as the major symbolic events in which *such* a community celebrates its origins, its ongoing life, and its destiny. Pneumatology will already have acknowledged this community’s relation to a multi-religious world, where the Holy Spirit is active everywhere, not just in the church and not only through the sacraments. This will take nothing away from sacramental theology or ecclesiology, or from the sacraments and the church, but it will make them very different realities from what they currently are often understood to be.

Moreover, I would argue for the *systematic* and so ‘*ordo doctrinae*’ priority of sacraments, at least baptism and Eucharist, vis-à-vis church. As John Dadosky has written of ‘*Ecclesia De Trinitate*,’¹⁴ so too we must speak of ‘*Ecclesia De Eucharistia*.’ The first Eucharist preceded or at best instituted the birth of the church, and I think there may be a radical theological message contained in that historical fact. The theology of the church is not first in the order of teaching but close to last, and so a theology and an ecclesial praxis that would understand the prior topics – Trinity, the Holy Spirit, the Incarnation, revelation, creation, anthropology, original sin, personal and social sin, redemption, and even the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist – in terms of an assumed ecclesiology rather than understanding the church in terms of the prior topics, is a distorted ecclesiology. The mission of the church is an extension of the missions of the Spirit and the Word, of divine Love and divine Truth. ‘As the

¹⁴ John D. Dadosky, ‘*Ecclesia de Trinitate: Ecclesial Foundations from Above,*’ *New Blackfriars* 94/1049 (2013) 64-78.

Father has sent me, so I send you.’ This means that the appropriate theological understanding of the church can occur only within the dogmatic-theological context set by an adequate Trinitarian theology and within the unified field structure established by the integral scale of values.

6.2 Anthropology

Second, we may ask about the place of what here is called ‘anthropology’ in the order of theological topics. History is understood by Lonergan in terms of the simultaneous tripartite dialectic of progress, decline, and redemption. The topics here called anthropology, original sin, personal and social sin, and redemption are meant to flesh out that structure of history.

‘Anthropology’ presents the theological category of ‘nature,’ where ‘nature’ is understood in terms of the creative and healing vectors in human consciousness, with the creative vector moving from below upward, as it were, from experience to understanding, from understanding to judgment, from knowledge to decision, and from that fourfold structure, viewed theologically as obediential potency for grace, to the gift of participation in divine life. That gift institutes a set of relations among the levels of the *humanum* from above downwards. This structure would be further complicated in the ‘anthropology’ component as here conceived, when it is recognized that the scale of values is isomorphic with the structure of consciousness. The scale is both the social objectification of the ‘nature’ that would be the source of progress in history and the normative grid against which the question of what constitutes genuine progress would be answered: progress is advance in the integral functioning of the entire scale of values.

6.3 Revelation

Third, it might be asked why ‘revelation’ appears before ‘creation’ in the order of topics. The reason lies in the intimate association of revelation with Incarnation. I follow here the suggestion of Charles Hefling, who locates in the human knowledge of Jesus of Nazareth the primary locus

of revelation.¹⁵ And so I am placing revelation quite early, as it were, in the *ordo doctrinae* of a systematic theology, because I think it follows quite easily upon the elaboration of the ontological and psychological constitution of the incarnate Word, especially when that elaboration includes, as it does for Lonergan, a rich understanding of the human knowledge of Jesus.¹⁶

6.4 Resurrection and Eternal Life

Fourth, while I specified the dogmatic-theological context as including not only Trinitarian theology, the link of pneumatology and grace, and Christology but also eschatology, I have, tentatively at least, placed resurrection and eternal life at the end in this order.¹⁷ This raises for me the most serious question about the order that I have proposed. It may very well be that resurrection and eternal life will have to be placed earlier in the *ordo doctrinae* unfolding of a systematics. What I wish to insist on is the place of resurrection itself in systematics. Christian eschatology is distorted when it is not centered in the resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of our own bodies as defining who we will be in the eternal kingdom of God. I would go so far as to say that even the theology of the supernatural has to be rethought from the standpoint of resurrection, for is it not true that the hypostatic union and the resurrection (where the Scholastic category ‘light of glory’ employed by Lonergan takes on a further significance) have a privileged place in the four-point hypothesis, and so in the list of the fundamental supernatural realities or created graces?

¹⁵ Charles Hefling, ‘Revelation and/as Insight,’ in *The Importance of Insight*, ed. John J. Liptay, Jr., and David S. Liptay (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007)

¹⁶ The new list given above in note 11 moves ‘revelation’ up even further, placing it above even ‘Incarnation.’ The reason has to do with the acknowledgment of revelation outside the biblical tradition. This changes nothing of the emphasis that I affirm from Hefling.

¹⁷ Again, this too was changed in the new ordering that emerged from the colloquium.

6.5 Thesis 61

Finally, this raises the next question that I know I must work out as I continue what I began in the first volume of *The Trinity in History*. Since I structured that volume around sixty theological theses, let me conclude this paper with the current version of thesis 61, with which I would begin the next volume.

Thesis 61: *Since the reality of the two divine processions with which the divine missions are identical is the reality to be attributed to relations, the missions themselves and the external terms that allow the processions to be missions will have a thoroughly relational structure.*

Lonergan moves closer to his specification of an analogical and obscure understanding of Trinitarian life by asking what *reality* is to be attributed to what have been *conceived* as two specifically distinct divine processions.¹⁸ If that reality is to be attributed to the processions, then of course it will be attributed as well to the missions, which are identical with the processions joined to created external terms. If that reality is the reality of real relations, *then the missions that are identical with the processions are real relations*, and the created external terms will manifest those real relations and participate in them. The missions are the divine relations joined to created external terms, and those created external terms are themselves the bases of created relations to uncreated terms and thus must display a participation in the order of the divine relations.

The terms of the divine relations as immanent to the Godhead are the opposed relations: paternity to filiation, filiation to paternity, active spiration to passive spiration, and passive spiration to active spiration. The missions add a created external term to each relation, and that created external term will also have to be understood in relational terms.

¹⁸ 'Postquam duae divinae processiones specific distinctae sunt conceptae, quaeritur quamnam realitatem iis attribui oporteat.' ('Now that we have *conceived* the two specifically distinct divine processions, we must ask what *reality* is to be attributed to them.') Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 230-31, emphasis added.

We have already seen two aspects of this relationality in the first volume of *The Trinity in History*.

First, we have seen that the created external terms are the bases of created relations to uncreated divine Persons. Thus, the secondary act of existence of the Incarnation is the created base of a created relation of the assumed human nature of Jesus to the uncreated divine Word. This relation, precisely as relation to the Word, participates in and imitates paternity, so that anyone who sees Jesus sees the Father.

Next, sanctifying grace is the created base of a created relation to the uncreated Holy Spirit, a relation that participates in and imitates active spiration. This means that a created participation in that same Spirit, that is, charity, is breathed from the elevation into a share in divine life that is sanctifying grace, in a manner analogous to the being-breathed of the Holy Spirit from the active breathing of the Father and the Son in their mutually opposed relations of paternity and filiation.

Thus, that same charity is itself the created base of a created relation to the Father and the Son. This relation participates in and imitates passive spiration, the Holy Spirit.

Finally, the light of glory (of which we have yet to say very much) is the created base of a created relation to the Father, as the Son leads us all back to the originating source of all.

Further, we have seen the intimate relation between two of those created external terms, namely, sanctifying grace and charity.

But that is not enough. For if the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are themselves relations to one another, there must also be a set of created relations among *all* of the created terms of those relations: not simply a relation *between* each of the created terms and the uncreated reality to which that base, as the term of a mission, is related. We have already seen two of these *relations among the terms*: the relation of sanctifying grace to charity and the opposed relation of charity to sanctifying grace. But we must construct a relational system that unites *all* of the created terms in the foundational reality of the created supernatural order. We must face the questions:

- What is the relation of the secondary act of existence of the Incarnation not only to the Word but also to sanctifying grace, to charity, and to the light of glory?
- What is the relation of sanctifying grace not only to the Holy Spirit, and not only to charity (which we have already established), but also to the secondary act of existence and to the light of glory?
- What is the relation of charity not only to the Father and the Son, and not only to sanctifying grace (which again we have already established), but also to the secondary act of existence and to the light of glory?
- And what is the relation of the light of glory not only to the Father but also to the secondary act of existence, to sanctifying grace, and to charity?

These four questions set the agenda for the next volume that I would like to contribute to this enterprise initiated by Darren Dias and Neil Ormerod. I am giving myself, God willing, seven years to write that volume, so with that agenda I hereby happily conclude the present contribution, in the hope that we might collaboratively be able to answer these questions.