

Response to Doran Lecture, November 4, 2010
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This lecture is incredibly rich. Prof. Doran engages the ineffability of these mysteries, and the challenge to articulate them within Catholic systematic theology. In reading and reflecting on the paper I struggle with my own limits in processing the barrage of stimulating insights I received while reading and contemplating it in advance of the lecture.

First, the notion of the indwelling of the Triune God in the individual person is a welcome emphasis, not only for systematic theology but more concretely for Christian spiritual praxis. Moreover, this development is bolstered by Prof Doran's linking of it with the scale of values and the social teaching of the church. He has undoubtedly broken ground in this article, and I am sure he would agree that much work remains to be done discovering and articulating the intelligible theological syntheses.

My second point concerns Prof. Doran's emphasis on the presence of sanctifying grace in other religious believers outside of Christianity. I am not only sympathetic with his position but I think it corroborates a development in the Church's self-understanding as highlighted in *Lumen Gentium*, II/14 as interpreted by Joseph Komonchak in his Pere Marquette Lecture of 2008. Counter to a tendency in the Bellarmine approach to ecclesiology to overemphasize the external and visible aspects of ecclesial life as necessary for full communion, Komonchak interprets *LG* II/14 as recognizing the habit of charity as the necessary condition for full membership. "[One] is not saved, however, who, though part of the body of the Church, does not persevere in charity." If Komonchak's interpretation is correct, then another way of stating this achievement is

that Vatican II represents the church coming of age in the third stage of meaning insofar as it grounds the foundation of ecclesial membership in the authenticity of the individual believers.

Still, given Doran's argument in the first two-thirds of the paper, the question arises, if sanctifying grace is sufficient for salvation and this occurs outside of the context of explicit Christianity, *and* if the habit of charity is the sufficient and necessary condition for salvation inside the Church, then it seems that the important ecclesial question becomes "Why be explicitly religious at all?"

The Eastern Orthodox theologian Vladimir Lossky argues that we can anticipate the emergence of ecclesiological errors that are analogous to the various historical Christological errors. In this way, the modern adage "spiritual but not religious" speaks to the Nestorian ecclesiological tendencies of our age. What is the mission of the Church to be in such a pluralistic age? In my own work I have suggested the emergence of a fourth stage of meaning as a new way of interreligious relating beyond that of fundamentalism. However, the unique role of the Church in this context remains to be addressed. I am encouraged by the hermeneutics of René Girard for a clarification along these lines.

I anticipated an engagement with these types of ecclesial questions in the final third of Prof. Doran's paper, perhaps through an articulation of the visible and invisible missions of the Son (and the Spirit). And while his analysis in this section is quite rich, it was unclear how the consciousness and knowledge of Christ is related to the visible missions specifically with respect to interreligious issues. However, to the extent that

Prof. Doran is feeling a growing desire to develop Lonergan's Christology (a task Lonergan himself never completed) I would encourage him to do so.

Third, Doran lists the major moments from scripture that pertain to the visible missions of the Word and the Spirit (p. 3). I note that the Baptism of Jesus is not referenced. It seems to me that the Baptism of Jesus is a pivotal and fruitful place to consider the inauguration of the two visible missions simultaneously in history. At Jesus' baptism, the Spirit joins the Word on the earthly mission—his ministry begins at this point. In other words, the baptism of Jesus inaugurates the joint visible missions of the Word and the Spirit in history. This emphasis not only explains the so-called hidden years of Jesus during the first 30 years of his life, but it solves the problem of the hermeneutics surrounding the reasons for Jesus' baptism (since he did not need to repent). This has implications for the Church's theology of baptism as well. The emphasis of the theology of the sacrament shifts from being primarily about justification and becomes more about participation in the church's mission as an extension of the visible mission of the Word and the Spirit in history (*Ecclesia de Trinitate*).

Finally and related to the above, Prof. Doran emphasized the analogy of judgments of value(s) in understanding the missions of the Word and the Spirit. However, I wonder, given the ecclesial issues listed above, whether judgments of fact might also serve a purpose especially with respect to the visible missions. When speaking of the visible missions of the Word and the Spirit in history, Christians do not just make judgments of value but they make judgments of fact: the Word *truly* has been spoken in the historical person of Jesus, the Spirit *truly* has been poured out in the historical community of his followers. This gives the followers their distinctive identity

and mission. The question remains, how are we to understand this mission in a fourth stage of meaning?