

LECTURES ON CONTEMPORARY
NAME CATHOLIC THEOLOGY. MARQUETTE
'77. PART TWO

No. D-68

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1. ~~The task transformation~~ Intro to Part II of course
2. ~~The Human Good~~ A general statement of the role of Catholic Christianity
3. ~~Conditions of the Human Good~~ → The notion of the human good.
4. The role of religion

1. We have completed the first 1/3 of our course, and with it the first of the three concerns with which we are to deal in the course: the principal characteristics of the modern world. We have attempted to ~~compose~~ ^{assemble} a composite understanding of the problems facing humanity individually and socially today. Vatican II and ^{lectures} and possibilities.

It would be well to reflect for a moment on precisely why we did this. Our course is a course in contemporary Catholic Theology. Theology I described as a reflective mediation of religion with culture, ^{a reflective attempt to bring ~~theology~~ to bear on culture.} The theologian must, then, be familiar with both the religion he is concerned with understanding and the cultural situation in which that religion finds itself. Our main concern thus far has been the ^{latter} ~~second~~: modern culture. We turn now to the ^{former} ~~first~~, and ask, What is Christianity? What is Catholic Christianity? What is its role in the modern world we have just studied? This was the second of the three themes of our course I mentioned in the first lecture. The third will deal with how theology, as a reflective discipline, can serve the Catholic community in fulfilling its task.

For the answer to this question, we shall rely on Lonergan, who is also the author you will be reading for the remainder of the course. My efforts will be geared to complementing in my lectures the readings you will be doing. Your work will be due on the second class of each week, which will be largely devoted to a discussion of the question you were to answer in your 1-page essays. ^(7 out of 9) But in the first class of each week I will be lecturing in areas germane to these essays of Lonergan's, so that the lectures will be integrated with your own work. I will not be answering your questions for

you, but at the same time I will not be dealing with something way off the track either.

A general statement of the role of Catholic Christianity:

2. Thus, as an initial approach to ~~today's~~ the second theme of this course, I wish to concentrate on two statements from the paper you have been reading for this week. I repeat: I am not addressing myself to the ^{specific} questions you must answer for Wed. (Thurs.), so you can't just go home and type out my lecture & hand it in for your paper. But I will try, as much as possible to use the essay you are reading for the springboard of my lecture.

The two statements I wish to draw on are:

a) p. 98: "In brief, the contemporary issue [for Catholics] is, not a new religion, not a new faith, but a belated social and cultural transition."

and b) ~~pp. 98 f.~~ ~~then to point~~ p. 99: "Today modern culture, in many ways more stupendous than any that ever existed, is surging round us. It too [like Greek and Arabic culture in the middle ages] has to be known, assimilated, transformed. That is the contemporary issue." In the next sentence, we are told that this contemporary issue is "a tremendous challenge."

You will note, then, that both of these ~~issues~~ statements mention "the contemporary issue": what is Catholic Christianity's task today? and they seem to focus on two different aspects: first, Catholic Christianity is called to make a belated social and cultural transition into the modern world; ~~and~~ ^{and}, this transition is not blind and all-accepting. We are not to throw out what was good in our heritage and transition and replace it with contemporary trash, but ^{to} understand, assimilate, and transform the developments of modern culture. Doing this, Lonergan says, will not involve

a world that no longer exists.
On the other hand, we are not to retreat to

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a new religion or a new faith, but the discovery of how to live as Christians, how to speak as Christians, how to choose and decide as Christians, within the modern world, and in so doing, how to change the modern world from within.

This, then, provides with a first and very rough approximation of how Lonergan would answer the second major question of our course: what is the role of Catholic Christianity in the modern world? Its role is to be one of transforming agent, from the basis of a critical appropriation of the developments of modernity. The latter is pre-condition of the former. If Catholics are to be transforming agents within modern culture, they must be thoroughly familiar with ^{and in interaction with} the intellectual, cultural, and social life of that culture. This is the first task for Catholic Christianity, and it is a task that we, the Catholic Church, have been late in answering. But this task is geared to the second and major one: the transformation of modern culture on the basis of Christian faith. Descriptively, we may assume this as the first and very rough, and perhaps vague, ^{and certainly general} answer to the question of the role of Catholic Christianity in the modern world: its role is ~~to~~ ^{to} transform that world on the basis of Christian faith. The vocation of the Church is to promote the human good. This involves transforming action.

2. The notion of the human good. To speak of the transformation of modern culture on

the basis of Christian faith is still quite general, though. <sup>How real-
ly is a good life for human beings lived today?</sup>
Transformation from what to what? The answer to this question is best seen in Lonergan's notion of the human good, or at least is best approached from this standpoint. The human good has many components, and a composite understanding of it is quite complex. Thus what Lonergan does is to treat its components

N.B.: focus on our lives in this world. (over)

The point is: if we are to have a clear idea of the transformation of the human world that it is the vocation of the Church to promote, we must first have a clear idea of what constitutes a truly good life for men and women in this world. What kind of world are we to promote? The vocation of the Church today is to transform modern culture in such a way that it promotes the human good. What, then, is the human good?

separately, before attempting to unite them into a composite whole. This is what we shall be doing in the next several classes: assembling another composite whole -- this time, not of modern culture, but of the life that is good for human beings, the life that it is the vocation of the Church to promote in this world. Today, we shall treat ~~these~~ ^{two} aspects of this life: the development of skills, ^{and} affective development; ~~and the notion of nature~~. [In the next class, we will discuss the role of beliefs in the life of man, and then shall discuss cooperation, the real meaning of progress, and the nature of decline. It is in connection with the themes of progress and decline that Lonergan specifies more precisely the role of religion, which will appear in the next two papers you shall read, "The Absence of God in Modern Culture," and "The Future of Christianity."]

a. The development of skills is the first intrinsic component of what constitutes a good life for man. What are skills? A skill is a function of the differentiation and combination of operations. Jean Piaget has studied the development of skills in children: learning to focus visually, to discriminate sounds, to manipulate objects, to walk, etc. Each of these skills demands differentiating certain operations and then combining them into groups. Walking involves many operations which are differentiated (specified off from undifferentiated movements) and combined into groups. It is basically by this differentiation and combination of operations that one develops mastery of a skill.

Louergan divides skills into two kinds, for there are two kinds of operations that we can learn. There are certain operations that are immediate: seeing, hearing, touching, moving. The world of these operations is immediately present to us: here and now. It is a world of immediacy. The infant's world is exclusively a world of immediacy, and involves exclusively immediate operations. The objects of an infant's operations are immediately present: they can be touched, grasped, seen, heard. The world of the infant is a world of immediate experience, a world of pleasure and pain, hunger and thirst, food and drink, rage and satisfaction and sleep. There are operations in this world of immediacy that the child differentiates and combines, and as it does so it develops certain skills: seeing, hearing, eating, walking, etc.

The second kind of skill that the human being can develop involves mediate operations, operations whose objects are not immediately present. The use of images, words, and symbols are examples. Through images, words, and symbols, something that is not immediately presented is represented, signified, and symbolized. As one learns to use images, words, and symbols, one's world expands immensely, for it comes to include persons and things that cannot be seen, heard, and touched, but that are nonetheless a real part of the world in which one lives. These operations are not immediate but mediate: they mediate to the subject aspects of the world that are not immediately present. Thus through words and images, I could, if I wanted to, explain to you right now how I understand the foreign policy of the Soviet Union

or the history of German philosophy or the equations of relativity. None of these objects is immediately present to us, but we could perform operations that would mediate these objects to us, represent them, signify them, symbolize them. These operations, mediate operations, thus introduce meaning into human life: they mean, they signify.

So one can develop skills involving immediate operations and skills involving mediate operations. One can learn to walk and see and hear, and one can learn to use language in a way that means, signifies, represents. There are many different worlds that one can come to feel at home in through these mediate operations: the common sense of one's culture, the world of science and philosophy and theology, the world of literature and history and art. As one comes to feel at home in these worlds, one is developing skills, learning to differentiate and combine operations that guarantees successful performance.

Now, successful performance in both kinds of operations is a component of the human good. It is good to be able to perform both kinds of operations, to be at home in the world of immediacy and in the various worlds constituted by mediate operations. It is good to be skilled in these operations, and without these skills one is regarded as uneducated, or perhaps disabled or even retarded. We value these skills,

we regard them as good. They are the first component of a good human life. They are a part of what constitutes a truly good life for men and women in this world. If the task of the Church is to promote the human good, the development of these skills is an intrinsic part of what the Church will be promoting ^{alone}.

Christian education.

Nevertheless, the development of human skills, does not yet specify what the vocation of the Church is: many people ^{can do} promote these skills, whether they are involved in a religious commitment or not: parents with their children, teachers with their students, community leaders and politicians with the people. So, while the promotion of the development of human skills will be an intrinsic part of the vocation of the Church, it is not the specific contribution of religion to the human good. Intrinsic but not specific. Further specification is needed if we are to have a precise notion of ^{just} how the vocation of the Church is to promote the human good. Other aspects of the human good must be uncovered and related to the development of skills if we are to understand the transformation of this world that it is the Christian vocation to promote. But this task will be intrinsically related to the development of skills, since ^{this is involved in} the promotion of the good human life in this world. (break)

b. The second feature of the human good is affective development, the development of human feelings. Lonergan

distinguishes two kinds of feelings: non-intentional feelings and intentional feelings. Non-intentional feelings are states and trends, whereas intentional feelings are responses to objects. Examples of non-intentional feelings are fatigue, irritability, anxiety, hunger, thirst. These feelings do not arise out of perceiving, imagining, representing an object. One first feels tired and then realizes one needs a rest. One first feels hungry and then realizes one needs food.

But intentional feelings are responses to an object that is perceived, represented, imagined: the object can be another person, a situation, our past, our future, a good or an evil. Examples are desire and fear, hope and despair, esteem and contempt, trust and distrust, love and hatred, tenderness and anger, admiration and repulsion.

Intentional Feelings permeate our other operations, ~~are~~ the operations that constitute our skills. Not only do we operate skilfully in different worlds, but we have feelings regarding the objects of those skilful operations: regarding what we see and imagine, understand and talk about, affirm and deny, choose and reject. These operations would be paper thin, Lonergan says, if they were not permeated with feeling. But because of our feeling about objects ~~are~~ our other operations are given momentum, drive, power.

Intentional feelings regard two classes of objects:

- a. the satisfying or dissatisfying, enjoyable or unenjoyable;
- b. values: the value of persons, of beauty, truth, virtue, noble deeds.

What is the difference? Response to value carries us toward self-transcendence. What is truly good always brings us to transcend ourselves. But response to what is satisfying or dissatisfying is ambiguous: what is satisfying may also be a true good. But what is truly good may also be disagreeable, may involve unpleasant work, privation, pain, sacrifice. Thus it is truly good to pursue a well-rounded education, but there are times when it is disagreeable, unsatisfying, hard. So the two may conflict. On the other hand, they need not conflict. It is truly good to get the exercise one needs to preserve and foster one's health, and one just may enjoy doing this. It is truly good to have friends who share one's interests and ideals, but it is also enjoyable to spend time with these friends. So the valuable and the enjoyable may or may not coincide. But the point is: ^{response to} what is truly good always involves self-transcendence, getting beyond my own self-interest and comfort and narrow world. This may or may not coincide with enjoyment. At times I may enjoy responding in a self-transcendent fashion to other persons, to study, to art, to generous deeds; at other times I may not enjoy these self-transcending operations. But the criterion of whether my response is good is not whether it is satisfying, agreeable, enjoyable, but whether it is self-transcending.

This notion of self-transcendence will be very important in the papers we will read from Lonergan. This is our first introduction

to it, and the point is to grasp it by relating to these examples and by creating your own examples. Feelings respond not only to what is enjoyable and pleasurable or unenjoyable and painful, but to what is good and evil, to value and disvalue. And the two do not coincide. What is good may ~~or may not~~ be ^{un}enjoyable, painful; what is evil may be enjoyable, pleasurable. But what is good may also be agreeable, and what is evil may be disagreeable also. The criterion of the good is self-transcendence, not pleasure, enjoyment, satisfaction.

Affective development is then a very complicated process. For good affective development would be a matter of: w/o excessive complaint

- a. coming to the point where one can accept, the unpleasant work, privations, sacrifices needed in order to pursue genuine value;
- b. even beyond this, coming to the point where, ^{what is good is also} what one loves and finds enjoyment in, is and what is evil is also what one is repelled by.

Feelings, then, respond to values, and in our next class we shall see that there are different kinds of value, different degrees of self-transcending responses, different kinds of objects of our value-orientation that can be arranged in a scale of values.