

Introduction to Systematic Theology
Class 5, October 5, 2009

Notice at the beginning – Add to the outline from last week:

8 Interiority, transcendence, and theology

We covered the material through the first three main sections of the chapter and the outline. By way of review:

(1) **The question of God.** The central affirmation of the first section of the chapter is that there *is* a question of God, and it is built into the very structure of our unfolding intentionality. There is a ‘native orientation to the divine.’ 103: ‘There lies within [our] horizon a region for the divine, a shrine for ultimate holiness. It cannot be ignored. The atheist may pronounce it empty. The agnostic may urge that he finds his investigation has been inconclusive. The contemporary humanist will refuse to allow the question to arise. But their negations presuppose the spark in our clod, our native orientation to the divine.’ Lonergan unpacks that native orientation by relating it to each of the kinds of question we raise. Thus he shows us three philosophic forms of the question of God.

Questions for intelligence: Why should the answers that satisfy us yield anything more than a subjective satisfaction? Why do we suppose them to possess some relevance to knowledge of the universe? Implicitly we grant that the universe is intelligible, and once that is granted there arises the question whether it could be intelligible without having an intelligible ground.

Questions for reflection: Such questions at times result in a grasp of the fulfillment of conditions for a judgment that something is true or false: what Lonergan calls a virtually unconditioned. The judgment has conditions, but they are fulfilled. Is the fulfillment of conditions possible without an unconditioned reality that has no conditions whatever? If the universe is intelligible, as we presume it is, can there be mere matters of contingent fact without explanation? (This is the argument of *Insight* for the existence of God.)

Questions for deliberation: Is it really worth while deliberating about what is worthwhile? Are we the only instance of moral agency in the universe, or does ‘worthwhile’ have some ultimate meaning? Ivan Karamazov. The question of ultimate justice.

(2) **Self-transcendence.** These questions give L a chance to present some reflections on self-transcendence, and so to relate both the question of God and religion to the issue of human authenticity (religious and personal values in the scale). The criterion of human authenticity lies in self-transcendence, and each successive level represents a greater degree of self-transcendence. But that capacity is fulfilled to the extent we are in love. There are three kinds of being-in-love: the love of intimacy usually manifest in the family; love in the community; and the love of God, where God’s love floods our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us (Romans 5.5).

(3) **Religious experience.** Being in love with God is the basic component in religious experience. As experienced, it is being in love in an unrestricted fashion, without limits, qualifications, reservations – the proper fulfillment of our capacity for self-transcendence. Not the produce of knowledge and choice, but a gift that dismantles present horizons and sets up a new horizon that transvalues our values and transforms our knowing. Galatians 5.22, a conscious dynamic state of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, self-control. It can be conscious without being known. In *Method* it is the fulfillment of the *fourth* level of intentional consciousness, but in later thought Lonergan acknowledges that the entire realm of love (in all three manifestations) is really a further dimension, one of total self-transcendence in self-surrender to the other.

New material. In *Method* and elsewhere, this dynamic state of being in love with God is what is really meant by the term ‘sanctifying grace,’ speaking of this reality in the language not of theory but of interiority. 107: ‘The gift we have been describing really is sanctifying grace but notionally differs from it. The notional difference arises from different stages of meaning. To speak of sanctifying grace pertains to the stage of meaning when the world of theory and the world of common sense are distinct but, as yet, have not been explicitly distinguished from and grounded in the world of interiority. To speak of the dynamic state of being in love with God pertains to the stage of meaning when the world of interiority has been made the explicit ground of the worlds of theory and of common sense. It follows that in this stage of meaning the gift of God’s love first is described as an experience and only consequently is objectified in theoretical categories.’

RD: In all of his earlier, more Scholastic and more metaphysical treatments of this reality, Lonergan distinguished sanctifying grace and charity. He explicitly admits in one Q&A at Boston that he has here amalgamated them. If you have a chance to come to my lecture on October 29, you will hear an argument for re-visiting that distinction and assuming into the stage of meaning governed by interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness. I equate sanctifying grace with being on the receiving end of God’s unqualified love (*gratia gratum faciens*), and charity with the love of God in return.

The last paragraph on 107 is also important (and can and should be made to align with my distinction). There is still much to be done in terms of a phenomenology of grace.

4 Expressions of Religious Experience

4.1 In general

108: ‘Religious experience spontaneously manifests itself in changed attitudes, in that harvest of the Spirit that is love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control. But it also is concerned with its base and focus in the *mysterium fascinans et tremendum*, and the expression of this concern varies greatly as one moves from earlier to later stages of meaning.’ In earlier stages outward occasions are what make religious experience something determinate and distinct for human consciousness. There result the gods of the moment, the god of this or that place, the god of this or that person, the god or gods of different groups. Such identifications can perdure in later stages, as when we think of certain places as holy places. In ‘Sacralization and