



# Lonergan and Pastoral Care

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## Caring for the Consciousness

- Grounding the person's self-awareness
- Using the images and symbols familiar to the person
- No matter what the religious tradition, the human life is grounded in God, whether understood or not
- This grounding is the basis for assurance
- Forgetfulness is the cause of disorientation
- Memory is a grounding in truth
- Truth is the foundation of security, a sense of safeness
- Safeness is self-possession in the midst of crisis

## Healing or Creating?

- Healing is from the depths outward
  - *Gratia sanans* is another name for *sanctifying grace*
  - The active Spirit permeating human consciousness
  - Dissolving of bias
  - Healing the effects of original sin (intellectual darkness, emotional confusion, paralysis of will)
- Creating is from outward to the depths
  - Engaging the human in developing virtue
  - Transfiguring the human
  - Actual grace partnering the human in becoming

## Biased or not?

- **Individual Egoism:** severely limited openness to the input of others; “My way or the highway.” Narrow mindedness; fearful of new concepts, new language, or new process
- **Group Egoism:** the above infecting an entire group
- **General or Theoretical Bias:** demands immediate results; no patience for the long term; anti-intellectual
- **Dramatic Bias:** psychic scarring due to the “drama” of the life; subconscious; stored in feeling memory of the psyche

## Religiously “in-love” or not?

- Is the person aware of its ground?
- Has the person “turned” toward it in awareness?
- Does the person feel “grasped” by a personal Love?
- Working with the person’s context such as it is
- Personal belonging to the Mystery is key, however perceived
- Restores assurance and safety
- This grounding as the basis for deep healing with or without curing

## Recognizing Conversion

- Religious conversion is the base: turning toward the ground of one’s being as the person perceives it to be
- Other forms of conversion flow from this:
  - Psychic conversion: the healing of dramatic bias
  - Moral conversion: the freeing of the will from short term satisfaction to long term good
  - Intellectual conversion: understanding how one’s consciousness works; taking control of intentionality
  - Christian conversion: religious conversion in Christ Jesus

## Psychic Conversion

- Dramatic bias cripples the imagination
- Images laden with pain are suppressed
- No new insights permitted to arise from these suppressed images
- Lonergan uses the name *scotosis* for psychic scarring
- Psychic conversion is the dissolving of scotosis
- Healing comes through therapy
- Healing comes through contemplative prayer and tears

## Moral conversion

- Before: the will is set on short term satisfaction
- After: the will seeks *long term good*
- A new judgment of *value*
- The key role of the emotions
- The question of *worth, of long term value*, becomes primary
- Attitude changes
- Behavior changes

## Intellectual conversion

- Not about getting new ideas
- Is about knowing how your *consciousness* works
- Is about claiming *intentionality*
- Is about claiming your role in *soul-making*
- Taking human instrumentality seriously
- Taking the human response to grace seriously
- Is knowing how you know
- Is being aware of the propensity toward personal bias
- Entering into full partnership with the Word

## Christian Conversion

- Religious conversion takes many forms: Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, etc.
- Christian religious conversion is Christic
- God coming to us in Christ Jesus
- God shining through humanness
- God in the midst of matter
- A sacramental God
- An incarnational God
- A communal God



## Being Authentic

- Being truly human
- Being a human constantly in transformation
- Becoming continually *informed, formed, and transformed*
- Being attentive to my experience
- Being intelligent in my questioning
- Being reasonable in my judgments
- Being responsible in my decisions
- Being *in-love* with God, with others, with the world



## Midwifery

- Pastoral care as attending to human relations
- As bringing an authentic humanness to those relations
- As drawing forth the possibility of healing
- As calling forth attentiveness
- As calling forth intelligent inquiry
- As calling forth reasonable judgment
- As calling forth responsible decision
- As relational match-making with the Divine



## In Living

- Calling forth a quality of life
- Calling forth an acceptance of limitation
- Calling forth a *spirituality of diminishment*
- Calling forth a trust that minimizes fear



## In Dying

- A form of labor
- Being born into eternal life
- Grounded in the soul's center
- With a loving trust that casts out fear
- Held tight in the Shepherd's arm
- Letting go of everything but the pearl
- Love effecting a transfiguration



## Questions and Answers/Comments