

Lonergan and Pastoral Care

NACC Audio Conferences

February 3, 2011

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Who is Bernard Lonergan, S.J.?

- Born in Buckingham, Quebec, December 17, 1904
- B.A. from University of London, 1930
- S.T.D. from the Gregorian University, Rome, 1940
- In 1970 received the highest honor given by the Canadian Government, naming him a *Companion of the Order of Canada*
- Taught in Montreal, Toronto, Rome, Harvard, and Boston College
- First love was economics
- Died November 26, 1984 at Pickering, Ontario at the Jesuit Infirmary; buried in the Jesuit Cemetery, Guelf, Ontario

What is he up to?

- A Jesuit, trained to be attentive to interior movements
- Was fascinated by the *working of Aquinas' mind*
- “The intelligence can only be known in its act.” *Summa Q. 85*
- Read Newman’s *Grammar of Assent* six times
- Became convinced philosophy was neglecting the subject’s own operations in the search for objective truth
- Called for a “shift to interiority,” the charting of the operations of consciousness to identify *intentionality* as it moves from *meaning* to *value* in human decision
- A second “axial shift”

Charting the Operations of Consciousness

- **Experiencing:** your senses, your own consciousness processing things; notice things; pay attention; listen; watch
- **Understanding:** question to connect data, to make sense of things
- **Judging:** a “yes” or “no” to data as fact, truth, reality
- **Deciding:** evaluating the worth, weighing the *value* of what you know in order to act on it or not

Clarifying how we come to “know” anything

- The recurrent, invariant, cross-cultural pattern
- Knowledge comes with the *judgment*
- The judgment is only *virtually* unconditioned
- The judgment is *objective*
- Objectivity is reached by authentic *subjectivity*
- The human process involved in *inspiration* and *infallibility*

Distinguishing “knowing” from “choosing”

- Knowing seeks *meaning*
- Meaning can be verbal, non-verbal, signed, mimed
- Choosing flows from value informed by meaning
- Value is concerned with *worth*
- Worth gets one to choose, to decide, to act
- A shift from intellect and will to cognitive and volitional *operations*

Why is this significant?

- Because it calls us to *accountability*
- We can be called to account not only for results, but *how we got to them*
- This is called *interiority analysis*
- It is morally and spiritually significant
- It calls us to check what we *intend*
- Intentionality becomes morally significant
- Conscience formation becomes intentional
- Can lead to transparent self-knowledge ecclesially, socially, politically, economically, and scientifically

It explains how consciousness works

- From the data of sense to the data of consciousness in my experience
- Through questioning for intelligent understanding
- Arriving at a judgment of fact based on understanding
- To a decision based on an evaluative judgment of worth

Explains how consciousness is informed/formed/transformed

- **Informed:** The questioning is key; if selective, or blocked, the judgment will be rash
- **Formed:** Objectivity is reached in the judgment; if the inquiry is superficial, the judgment will be rash, the result of bias
- **Transformed:** If the cognitive anthropology is accurate, sketching how we come *to know*, then it provides an explanation of developmental knowledge in any and all disciplines, and across cultures

Provides language for dialogue

- Doctors and medical personnel
- Psychologists and psychiatrists
- Counselors and therapists
- Pastoral Care personnel
- Spiritual Directors

How do we begin?

- Clarifying key terms:
 - consciousness
 - “levels”
 - intentionality
 - imperatives
 - vectors
 - bias

Explaining the levels of consciousness as *self-reflexive*

- Experiencing myself as experiencing
- Experiencing myself as understanding
- Experiencing myself as judging
- Experiencing myself as deciding
- Experiencing myself as being grasped by religious love (God) in “religious” experience

Identifying the contemplative core of consciousness

- Consciousness as the self-aware psychic life force of the soul
- The life force rooted in Divine Mystery
- True even if not known or understood
- The root of my being as creature
- The root of original sin is *forgetfulness*
- Returning to this core is going *home*
- Recovery of this center is the source of authentic healing as distinguished from *cure*

Questions and Answers/Comments