



## Aquinas, Lonergan, and the split soul

*In this lecture delivered at the Aquinas Institute of Theology, St. Louis, Missouri, January 28, 1986 (The Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas), Sister Carla Mae Streeter, O.P., summarizes Thomistic spirituality, assesses the state of spirituality today and focuses on the thought of Bernard Lonergan, S.J., an Aquinas scholar who proposes to do for our time nothing less than Thomas did for his: give us the new synthesis needed to move theology and ourselves into a new age and provide a way to heal the rift that exists between academic and spiritual theology.*

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The study of theology is an intellectual ministry. For Thomas, its object was the Mystery of God. It operates with a double dynamic: faith seeks understanding, and understanding seeks faith. The hunger of our time is for a faith once more that is credible.

Theology is struggling for its life in our time. Cartesian thought patterns would have us spin our wheels in the mud of conceptualism.<sup>1</sup> The Kantian "turn-to-the-subject" lures us to adopt a mind-view that splits reality into two distinct worlds: the phenomenal and the noumenal (to which reason simply cannot attain).<sup>2</sup> With the modern existentialist, metaphysics is finally dismissed as no more than a construct of the mind inherited from the Greeks and rigidified by scholasticism. Thus, the stage is set for the philosophical eclipse of God.

The two world wars brought home historically the unbelievable destructive-

ness of the human being. History and philosophy then united to sing a dirge for a humanity entombed inside its own moral impotence. In the midst of this dark night of the eclipse of God, theology and the theologians become a voice crying out in the wilderness.

Our times are similar to those of Thomas only in the sense that we too are on the brink of the close of an era and the birth of another. What kind of theologians are going to be needed to mid-wife the new age? And what kind of theology?

I suggest that Karl Rahner was right when he said a few years before his death that the theologians of the future will be mystics, or they will be nothing at all. Our need then is for theologians who pray, and mystics who have found words. We have need of theologians who can operate from a viewpoint inclusive and empirical enough to challenge the

most secularist thinker; theologians who can explain *how* religious experience is the core, not only of their own exegetical and doctrinal work, but of secular reality itself, including the wonder of the sciences.

## I THE SITUATION

It is helpful in trying to understand a situation, to sketch its history. We will do this by dividing our Christian history into four stages: 1) The *scriptural* or *experiential* period. Its language was imagery and prayer, and its aim was to articulate its experience of God in Christ Jesus. Its writings have come down to us as the Christian scriptures. 2) The *theoretical* period. Its language is the creedal statement, and its aim is to articulate clear statements of belief that flow from the Jesus-experience of the Christian community. Roughly, this is the patristic period in our history. 3) The stage of *systematization*. Its language is metaphysical and its aim is not merely to state *what* is believed, but *how* these beliefs relate to one another in a wholistic system. This is roughly the medieval period in our history. 4) The *personalist* stage. Its language is subjective, and its aim is to relate religion to life. Ushered in by the protestation of the sixteenth century, this time seeks once again the concretization of religious experience. Moving us into what is known as the Enlightenment, and what became expressed philosophically as the Kantian "turn-to-the-subject," this fourth stage reached its narcissistic zenith in the rationalism, scientism, nationalism, and materialism that marks recent history. I would like to suggest that we are living on the brink of yet another age. I will call it the age of conscious interiority, using the word as

Lonerger uses it, to identify an age of raised consciousness. This new consciousness is already upon us. It is attuned to the earth. It is historically in touch, and psychologically self-aware. Mechanization seeks to abort it, to at least reduce it to an unobservant, unquestioning mentality ready to abdicate choice. These are the birth-pangs of our time, the time in which we are doing a theology in search of its own soul.

### What is spirituality?

The scriptural period of our history knows nothing of the more abstract term *spirituality*. Instead, one finds the Latin words *spiritus* and *spiritualis* as the translation of Paul's *pneuma* and *pneumatikos*. Walter Principe is careful to point out in his writings that these terms are contrasted with Paul's "flesh" (*sarx* or *caro* and *sarkikos* or *carnalis*), not with "body" (*soma* or *corpus*, *somatikos* or *corporalis*).<sup>1</sup>

The abstract term *spiritualis* is first used by an unknown author early in the fifth century. It is clear from the context that the author intends to preserve the Pauline sense of the word, for the author is urging a life according to the Spirit of God. This meaning is preserved by authors until the thirteenth century. There is the exception of a ninth-century use for the word that would become prominent in the twelfth century and later: the opposition of "spiritual" to "bodily" (*spiritualitas* to *corporalitas* or *materialitas*). Principe reports that in Thomas' own works the term *spiritualis* is found some five thousand times and *spirituality* occurs some seventy times, mostly in the Pauline sense. Thomas does, however, use the term in a good number of texts in opposition to matter or bodiliness.<sup>2</sup> The original Pauline sense slowly recedes into the back-

ground. By the seventeenth century a pejorative use of the word arises in referring to persons under suspicion, and Principe suggests this may account for the infrequent use of the word into the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup>

It is in the early twentieth century that the term "spiritualité" began to be used often in France. Several new publications appear, their titles making clear distinctions between mysticism and asceticism. In 1943, the Institut Catholique de Paris established a chair in "Histoire de la spiritualité," with Etienne Gilson giving the inaugural lecture.<sup>4</sup> Following this event, numerous studies appear in French, many of them reflecting the opposition of soul to body that had emerged in the twelfth century.

The word "spirituality" has a broad meaning in English. Usually it means little more than "regard for things of the spirit as opposed to material and worldly interests."<sup>5</sup> In general works Principe reports that there is no reference to spirituality as a branch of study within theology.

In Christian circles, Principe detects three uses of the term spirituality: 1) referring to the lived experience; 2) a teaching about the lived experience; and 3) a study by scholars of the experience and the teaching.<sup>6</sup> What is included in such a study frequently reveals narrowness in a person's or group's vision regarding helps or barriers to growth in life in the Spirit. This narrowness is the result, already evident in the fourteenth century, of the growing disintegration of doctrinal theology. Moral theology as separate from doctrinal theology, and mystical theology from moral, systematic and dogmatic theology, follows. The relation to theology as a whole becomes lost, and concentration in spirituality is directed to results produced in religious

consciousness.

The broader view of spirituality that Principe recommends is a consideration of the total context of the lived life. This includes one's theology and one's religious attitudes. It also includes the psychological, historical, anthropological, sociological, philosophical, and linguistic influences of one's milieu. To settle for less, Principe says, runs the risk of settling for a truncated or disincarnate view of a spirituality as lived or taught.<sup>7</sup>

What, then, will we use as a tentative definition of this abstract term? Principe suggests that spirituality refers to those aspects of a person's living a faith or commitment that have both to do with striving for the highest ideal or goal of that living.<sup>8</sup> Vernon Gregson (Loyola University, New Orleans), prefers to deliberately avoid any reference to self-cultivation. He prefers to speak of spirituality as that *state* of openness which results from the *moment* of religious conversion. Gregson points out that this state of openness emphasizes the continuity of the *moment* of the religious conversion experience with the *entire* unfolding intentionality of the human spirit: intellectual, moral, and religious. What the word conversion highlights is a most important *part* of spirituality, namely the freeing from all drives that hamper that openness.<sup>9</sup>

### Theology's historical disintegration

This brings us to the heart of our consideration: despite the early impact of renewal that followed Vatican II, traditional theology and spirituality remain in their separate camps, each with a growing sense that business cannot go on as usual, but without a viable framework to once again relate them while respecting their distinct emphases.

The rediscovery of both biblical and

patristic theology by the Council Fathers became the reason to arouse hope of a new synthesis, but neither the Council documents, so rich in implications for spiritual life, nor the writings that followed the Council, have brought about this synthesis.<sup>12</sup> The great generation of theologians who started the patristic renewal has been fading, and the new generation of patristic scholars is not in the mainstream of theological discussion. Biblical research, in contrast, is in the mainstream, but scholars here pay less attention today to the full meaning of a text understood only in and through the church's faith. Instead, concentration focuses on the minute details of historical-critical analysis. Students who pursue biblical studies hoping to enrich their understanding and find a living word that speaks to their lives, find only what they call a sterile "academic" theology. Many of these students abandon both the pursuit and the scriptures, concluding that present biblical research can provide little real guidance for their lives. The resulting disillusionment breeds an anti-intellectualism that takes refuge in movements of enthusiasm that consider theological study useless.

At the same time, there is a widespread hunger for spirituality in America. The market is flooded with works which include the classics of Christian religious experience and others seeking to relate recent psychological insights into spirituality. Contemporary theology, in its turn, continues to offer a diffuse diet that reflects its shifting concerns. These concerns range from a critique of classical theism to liberation and feminist theology. But nowhere has there emerged the clear synthesis for an adequate theology of spirituality accessible to all. Instead, conferences on spirituality range from popular religious psychol-

ogy to studies of oriental mysticism and charismatic spirituality. As wide-ranging as these pursuits are, they have in common the minimal or non-existent role given to sound doctrinal understanding. Concentration instead is put on what the participant gains from spiritual experience, be it "fulfillment" or "divine consciousness." The preconciliar divorce between theology and spirituality continues in the postconciliar church, and both theology and spirituality are the losers. Spirituality risks the loss or distortion of the very Mystery with which it is concerned, and theology risks explaining doctrines that are unrelated to personal appropriation and growth in the Spirit of Christ Jesus. How did this tragic situation arise historically?

The scriptural or experiential stage of our history announces the gift of a new heart to replace our hearts of stone, and Jesus breathes forth the healing Spirit, who is to effect that change, at the close of the Paschal Mystery. The Holy Spirit is not something foreign and extrinsic to the human spirit. Rather it is the indwelling reality of the immanent God dynamically transforming us from within so that we can grow into the stature of Christ Jesus. Every facet and fiber of our being is involved in this transformation, the Spirit bringing it about and rejoicing in its completion every step of the way. Careful analysis of the biblical word *pneuma* reveals both a trinitarian and an anthropological sense.<sup>13</sup> The two senses cannot be separated. There is a personal appropriation of the Holy Spirit by our spirit in faith, and in the community of the church. By this appropriation, the life of Christ Jesus becomes increasingly manifest in us. This process has a cognitive aspect: to the degree that we act in the Spirit, we come to know God.

In the patristic period, theology and

spiritual doctrine still permeate one another in a still undifferentiated unity. It is typical of this period to find, in quite speculative treatises on the trinity or christology, direct references to corresponding areas of spirituality: references to the dynamism by which one comes to participate personally and/or communally in the Mystery discussed. In addition to theological and spiritual consideration not being sufficiently distinguished in this period, the actual aim of many of these patristic theological works was spiritual. They aimed unashamedly at preparing their readers for loving union with God, because for the Fathers as well as the biblical authors, mere theoretical knowledge of the Mystery of God was considered impossible. Theology flowed out of conversion, and that conversion effected an actual transformation of the person, initiating in him or her a gradual conformity to Christ Jesus. As a result, the human nature, deformed by sin, gradually becomes a transparent *Imago Dei* again. The process of this transformation has two dimensions. First there is the "active" dimension. This *vita activa* involved serious intellectual activity, specifically study of the scriptures. The spiritually mature were thus prepared for the second dimension: the contemplative. This *vita contemplativa* was entered through prayer experience. The *contemplatio, speculatio, or theoria* that flowed from this fountainhead was not what we call today *theoretical* knowledge. It was communion with the Father through the Son in the power of the Spirit that struggled for articulation. It was *experiential* knowledge of God seeking theological expression. In the words of Gregory the Great: "Love itself is Knowledge." Lonergan will say that the knowledge born of love is faith, and faith then seeks to explain itself as best it can.

Strictly speaking, experiential knowledge is ineffable. There are no adequate words for it. Yet the effort to communicate in either words or images from contemplation is the task of the theological gnosis or, in the Latin tradition, *sapientia*. This conscious interpenetration of spiritual experience and its articulation continued until the Scholastic Movement of the Middle Ages.<sup>14</sup>

With Scholasticism, the differentiation of theology and spirituality began. The serious study of the "active" first stage of theological development began to be called theology. Its method focused on formal logic. Prayer, conversion, and experiential knowledge of God ceased being an integral part of its method. This does not mean that theology became such for all, but a new notion of theology emerged: scripture — prayer — doctrinal theology became exegesis + doctrine + morals + spirituality = theology.

The University Movement and the pressure of growing cultural intellectualism had much to do with this differentiation. In addition, the growing pressure from the metaphysical questions of the day made the time ripe for a systematizing of doctrinal theology that addressed metaphysical questions. The theology that would flow from Thomas' contemplative love would have to speak to those questions and he would have to look for a framework that would serve this purpose. Aristotle's categories became that framework, but it must not be forgotten that Thomas, always the contemplative theologian, altered that framework to conform to revelation. Specifically, he added to Aristotle's "substance" the act of existence *given* to the form of the substance from a First Cause, giving the dynamic act of existing priority over essence.

Thomas has been accused of being largely responsible for scholastic rigidity and the split between theology and spirituality. I would like to suggest that Thomas' authentic existentialism in its subtlety was lost, almost immediately after his death, by many who called themselves Thomists. The result was a decadent scholasticism that has plagued western philosophy and theology ever since. It is this scholasticism that modern existentialists, such as Heidegger, rightfully reject when they call for the destruction of metaphysics and return to existential reality.

In any case, by the late Middle Ages, the second step in the differentiation of theology and spirituality occurred: not merely the distinction, but the separation of spiritual topics from theology proper. No more is the emphasis of spirituality the interiorizing of the objective mysteries of faith. The emphasis now turns to individual experience with an accent on the extra-ordinary. The minute psychological analysis of mystical states and extraordinary graces becomes the separate discipline known as mystical theology. In contrast, the ordinary way, emphasizing moral struggle, mortification, and spiritual exercise, becomes ascetical theology. Moral theology too emerges as a distinct branch at this time. No longer concerned with the goal and means of reaching Christian perfection, it focuses on the moral minimum needed to remain in the state of grace. By the seventeenth century, the process of specialization had been completed.<sup>15</sup> It is not the distinction of those areas that we are bemoaning here. It is the separate development of these areas away from one another that has distorted all of them. Doctrinal theology became disconnected from biblical revelation, and turned almost exclusively in the West to a christo-

centrism that leaves a theology of the Holy Spirit undeveloped. Moral theology lost its identity as a response to an incarnate and redemptive love, and focused on sin and its avoidance. Ascetical/Mystical theology found little guidance in a Doctrinal theology preoccupied with metaphysical and apologetical problems, and focused on the individual's struggle for perfection and the various states and degrees of mystical union. It is this situation that a church seeking the renewal of a new Pentecost has inherited.

## II

### TOWARD REINTEGRATION

It will be helpful, as we begin to consider the reintegration of theology and spirituality, to question the troublesome divisions of Ascetical/Mystical theology, and to identify the object of what we will call Spiritual Theology.

The artificial division of Ascetical/Mystical theology has caused confusion from its introduction in the seventeenth century. Although psychologically distinct, the areas of the human struggle emphasized by the term *ascetical* are not theologically different from a conscious experience of uncreated grace as the revelation and self-communication of God, which is Mystical Theology. Very often it is in the very midst of the poverty of the human struggle that the compassionate movement of God is felt. We might, then, make these distinctions: mysticism refers to the *experience* of Mystery, and Mystical Theology is the reflection on all aspects of this experience. The data for Mystical Theology then becomes experience. Its sources are scripture and the written accounts of the mystics of the Christian tradition. The evaluation of the writings of the mystics is done then in

the light of the entire doctrinal subject matter of theology (trinity, incarnation, redemption, church, sacraments and eschatology).<sup>16</sup>

What then is the immediate object of Spiritual Theology? If theology is reflection on religion, the God/human bond in a concrete culture, and Mystical Theology is reflection on the religious experience that is at the core of that bonding, then Spiritual Theology has as its object the twofold interrelated dynamism of God's activity of healing and restoring this human creature, and the creative response of the human person in faith, hope, and charity to that loving initiative. The object of spirituality is the whole of revelation as it is aimed at the total restoration of the human being. This double dynamism of the Spirit, the self-gift and the response, is not on the fringes of revelation, it is at its very center. As such it cannot be divorced from Doctrinal Theology. Yet, the nexus of this object of Spiritual Theology with the obvious concerns of Doctrinal Theology does not remove the necessity of distinguishing them. The identification of the object of Spiritual Theology as the whole of revelation aimed specifically at restoring the human *Imago Dei*, is essential if there is to be any hope of reintegration. It is needed for the mutual dependence and integration of the two disciplines, while respecting their distinctness. The reconciliation promises exciting consequences for Doctrinal Theology, restoring it to what is at its heart, and without which it is reduced to sterility. At the same time, spirituality, constricted in the straitjacket of an unhealthy subjectivity, could be challenged to free itself from its focus on narrow, isolated, pseudo-spiritual experiences. With its object clarified, spirituality could become a sound and credible Spir-

itual Theology, an integrative discipline that once again unveils the healing and creative dynamism at the heart of current secular concerns and challenges.<sup>17</sup>

### Struggle of mainline theologues

We can express the focus of Spiritual Theology by the one word "experience," for it begins with existential praxis. Likewise, we can characterize present Doctrinal Theology as theoretical in its present orientation.

Said another way, Doctrinal Theology as theory seeks the objective. It represents the important orientation of the subject-toward-objectivity. It is the nature of theory to bypass subjectivity in order to open up objective spheres of reality. In contrast and as a complement, praxis regards human action. It is concerned with what we actually do, or possibly can do. Maturely, praxis is involvement and commitment. By our actions we become who we are. Praxis is intersubjective. It represents the orientation of the subject-toward-subjectivity.<sup>18</sup>

It is no coincidence that the relationship of theory and praxis is the nub of philosophical and theological discussion in our time. The serious call for authentic praxis from within the theological discipline and from outside it by philosophy, is but a confirmation that all is not well.

Matthew Lamb points out that the relationship between theory and praxis involves three recurring issues.<sup>19</sup> First, there is the reflex character of the relationship. Generically speaking, cognition is a type of action, and action is always in some manner cognitive. Second, this reflex character inevitably moves toward a quest for norms of truth and authentic human living. This quest for norms can be carried on in a classical mode relating the norms to absolute reality, or the ideal. In this case theory will

be primary as in Aristotle's notion of theoretical science governed by the metaphysical idea of necessary first principles or Hegel's sublation of praxis by theory as the absolute idea.<sup>20</sup> Or the quest can be done empirically, setting up the norms according to something within material reality that is publicly observable and able to be verified. In this approach there is the danger that praxis can be identified with the manipulation identified with modern scientific methods. But there is a third option. The quest can be done critically and, in this case, the norms reflect the structural dynamics of individual and collective human performance, thus giving primacy to praxis while arguing that theorizing is itself a form of praxis to be understood critically. In this approach, the operating structure of human performance becomes basically normative.

The relationship of theory and praxis also involves the issue of religious implication. There are three tendencies here also: 1) There is the tendency toward the undifferentiated sacralizing of medieval times; 2) the undifferentiated secularizing of our own times; and 3) a differentiated sacred-secular context brought about by a critical differentiation of consciousness. This differentiation will be proportionate to the needs of truly critical theory and genuinely liberating praxis, of knowing the truth through doing the truth.<sup>21</sup>

These three issues in the relationship of theory and praxis continually recur and make evident that theology is in search of the very foundation of theory and praxis, a foundation that can ground complementarity such as enlightening and converting, thought and choice, incarnation and eschatology, universalism and particularity. That new foundation can come only through a differentiation

of consciousness inclusive enough to evaluate various forms of theological attempts to correlate experience and symbol, praxis and theory. The challenge of our time is to effect a theological transposition, to move to a level of operation that grounds both theory and praxis. It is to move into the realm of what Bernard Lonergan calls philosophical interiority, the analysis of the structure or recurrent pattern of human consciousness itself.

#### Thomas in a new key

In leading us to the realm of philosophical interiority, Lonergan as an Aquinas scholar leads us not to Thomas' conceptualizations, but to appropriate in ourselves the recurrent pattern of intellectual performance from which concepts emerge. Thomas used his intelligence theologically, that is, in a discipline that mediates between the Christian religion and the cultural matrix in which it exists. Thomas' three-fold distinction of *lectio* (exegesis), *disputatio* (theology), and *praedicatio* (pastoral application) when considered carefully, implies a further distinction in the middle step of *disputatio*, or theology proper. It is the distinction of an *ordo inventionis* from an *ordo doctrinae*, a theology in process toward the verbal articulation of a judgment of truth.<sup>22</sup> Where did Thomas get these functional distinctions if not from performance based on the appropriation of his own sharp differentiation of consciousness?

Thomas, however, worked within a classical framework of theology. He started from beliefs or articles of faith. When a culture is operating empirically, as is ours, the theological focus shifts or transposes from theology's nature to theology's method. This shifts the focus to the interior operational and verifiable

praxis of the theologian him or herself. To escape the danger of a narrow empiricism in this shift, the mystical basis of theology in faith must be made explicit. It no longer suffices to presume it, or the acceptance of beliefs. Theology's scriptural texts are no longer simply objects of belief. They have become documents investigated by historical-critical method. No longer can the conversion of the theologian be assumed. Conversion, religious, moral, and intellectual, must be explicitly explained in terms of the data of consciousness to a culture steeped in a secular, not sacral, worldview. These conversions for Lonergan become the hermeneutical and methodological crux of a theology once more grounded in experience and verifiable in terms of the data of human consciousness.

For Thomas, pastoral application (*praedicatio*) was an addendum to theology proper. Not so for Lonergan. It is integral to the theological task. Lonergan's "method" is the invariant and recurrent pattern of the intelligent operation of the theologian, unflinchingly rooted in the mystical experience of faith. Thomas' three-fold division becomes a functionally specialized differentiation of operations, a praxis of the theologian-in-act. Thomas' division is expanded and differentiated into eight functional specialties.<sup>23</sup> We are not being asked to accept the results of Thomas' great mind, but its process. That process reveals the operations of an intelligence in love with God.

### III THE NEW SYNTHESIS

Both philosophers and theologians are being called by Bernard Lonergan to engage in interiority analysis. Rather

than have us begin with yet another theoretical framework, Lonergan would have us move behind theory to the experience of our own operations as thinkers. What Lonergan is asking, is an attentiveness to what we are doing when we come to know anything. Beginning with an *implicit* metaphysics grounded in the praxis of experience, he will guide us to the *content* of what we know when we know, or an *explicit* metaphysics. This is, then, no self-enclosed introspection. We are asked to "catch ourselves in the act" and name what our own conscious operations are. Recall that for Thomas, the subject and object are one in the *act* of intellection. By beginning with the act, the performance, one gains the experience to understand what the performance is.<sup>24</sup>

Lonergan's goal is an adequate account of human consciousness, and he believes this can be done by making more explicit the Aristotelian-Thomas doctrine of the identity-in-act of subject and object. He holds that consciousness is not only cognitive, but constitutive of the subject. Further, although the *proper* object of the intellect is what is knowable in the sensible, the *formal* object of that intellect is being itself.<sup>25</sup> What one knows, says Lonergan, is metaphysics. It is being, utterly concretized. Lonergan is the only philosopher who then distinguishes epistemology from cognitional theory. Cognitional theory is the performance of intelligent consciousness. It is what we are *doing* when we are knowing. Epistemology is why that, and only that, can be called "knowing." Nothing else will do. Lonergan's "method" is really no how-to-do-it set of rules. It is the invariant pattern in us that Lonergan discovered by attending to his own operations of consciousness. He is convinced that Thomas' *quaestio* reveals the same

attentiveness in this medieval genius, although there is in Thomas no explicit cognitional theory.

What is this framework of intelligent operation? What is Lonergan's "method" which is really ourself-in-act? Lonergan has given us a highly developed cognitional theory, one that can only be verified by self-appropriation, or ourselves doing the same attending and concluding, "Yes, that is what I do." The theory is verified by ourselves getting into the act.<sup>24</sup> (See diagram, p. 326)

Our human consciousness is a unified whole. It is myself, the subject, that acts. When this performance is "run in slow motion" as it were, Lonergan detects five levels of conscious operation, each with its own set of acts.

The first level is simply *experiencing*. It is the perception of data by the senses: seeing, smelling, touching, hearing, and tasting. When questions of inquiry start about this data, a second level is entered, the level Lonergan calls *understanding*. This wondering about the hundreds of images that come from sensory data leads to the moment of insight, the linking of this data that pivots the intelligence into understanding. The understanding clothes the insight (the abstract Aha!) with just enough of the image to form a concept or idea. Ideas are constructs made out of insights. Questions for reflection indicate a third level, for a bright idea is not always a right idea. Over and over the intelligence reworks the material before it, until insights coalesce, the questioning of a particular matter ceases, and a judgment is reached as to the truth or falsity of the matter. A fourth level, initiated by questions of value, indicates a weighing and evaluating of the worth of the judgment for my life. The truth discovered is measured with the incisive value-probe, so what?

It is what is worthwhile that we act upon, and so this fourth level culminates in decision or commitment.

This very simply is the dynamic structure of one's cognitional and moral being, operating in the feeling-field of the sensitive human psyche. As Lonergan says,

There is then a rock on which one can build . . . the rock . . . is the subject of his (her) conscious, unobjectified attentiveness, intelligence, reasonableness, responsibility.<sup>25</sup>

One is to be attentive in experiencing, intelligent in seeking understanding, reasonable in forming judgments about that understanding, and responsible for one's choices. To this Lonergan adds in a footnote, ". . . the more important part of the rock has not yet been uncovered," and by this he means the gift of God's love poured forth in our hearts.<sup>26</sup>

This fifth depth-level, housing the apex of the sensitive psyche or soul, is Lonergan's identification of what much classical mystical literature has attempted to write about. Known by a variety of names, from peak of the soul to innermost room of the castle, it is that level of experience known as being grasped by religious love. Lonergan adds a fifth imperative to the other four, namely, be in love, and by it he means *exist in the experience of being loved*.

Frederick Crowe, foremost expositor of Lonergan's thought, prefers the word "organon" to "method" for this basic framework of human operation.<sup>27</sup> The word captures for me the "sounding" of the entire incarnated human consciousness as an outreach from the heart.

#### Unified human consciousness as organon

Lonergan uncovers for us a developing and dynamic human consciousness

that is unified in its interrelated operations and differentiated in the levels of those operations. As the foundation of these operations, he identifies a level voiced by mystics of all traditions for centuries. For the first time in the history of philosophy we have an inclusive framework, an *organon* or the healing and creative vectors of what has been known, in classical terminology, as operative, habitual, or sanctifying grace. It is interesting to note that Lonergan's own thesis, submitted to the Gregorianum in Rome (1943), was entitled: *Gratia Operans: A Study of the Speculative Development in the Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*. Here we see already what will be Lonergan's focus: the full operation of the human person in response to the initiative of grace, and his first paradigm will be the dynamic intelligence of Thomas himself.

In "Healing and Creating in History" (1975),<sup>28</sup> Lonergan expands on the double dynamism that is operative in human consciousness. Going on simultaneously with creativity, as though the human subject and the Spirit of God were partners in some magnificent dance, the movement of healing "from above downwards" is a relentless compassionate siege against the citadel of egoism and bias.<sup>29</sup> The healing is for the creating, the movement "from below upwards," that ceaseless summons into full operation of every level of human consciousness to radically *constitute* future history.

In Lonergan the age-old debate of grace and freedom is transposed, for he has worked out in existential terms the reality of Thomas' insistence on the seriousness of secondary causality. It is the person grasped by love and healed from egoism in an on-going process that can freely enter the creative dynamic in order to constitute human society on the model

of the person of integrity, an embodied spirit that is outreach from the heart.<sup>32</sup>

#### Toward a healed and whole theology

We are now ready to ask what this new self-understanding has to do with the doing of theology.

We have learned that we can no longer begin the doing of theology dogmatically. Instead, the dogmatician has been challenged to a type of cognitive therapy. The theologian is either attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible, and in love with the Mystery, or not. This movement toward authenticity or its lack will enter into the *inventionis*, the doing of the theological task. Since this consciousness is operating in the theologian, then what is done should be able also to be explained functionally, revealing the operations of the levels of consciousness. Keeping in mind that consciousness works in dynamic, cyclic, and cumulative fashion,<sup>33</sup> Lonergan expands Thomas' *lectio-disputatio-praedicatio* model into eight theological functions.

The first four functional specialties (see outer part of diagram) are forms of *lectio* or study of theological data mediated through one's culture. *Research* is the exegesis of texts. *Interpretation* identifies theology itself as hermeneutical in its search for meaning. *History* for Lonergan is judging what is developing or moving forward in the data of a culture. *Dialectic* is the admittance of opposing viewpoints onto the grid of a personal viewpoint universal in scope, so as to weigh those viewpoints according to the criteria of the movement toward authenticity. These first four tasks of theology can be done by a non-believer.

Recall that in Thomas' simple pattern, *lectio* is accompanied by prayer. It is here that the theologian enters into the

contemplative experience which is the source of the experiential knowledge that prayer alone brings. For Lonergan, after "moving across the top" one enters theology proper, the *theoria* that is no longer only reason seeking faith, but faith now seeking understanding. The four remaining specialties are identified from within this faith context. They are *Foundations*, which deals objectively with the reality of conversion, religious, moral, and intellectual in the theologian; *Doctrines*, which are statements of belief emerging from faith; *Systematics*, which relate the doctrines to each other; and *Communications*, which is the translation of the language of theological jargon into the common-sense language of the man and woman on the street.

It is important to note that these functional specialties of theology, because they are based on what actually goes on in human consciousness, can be applied to any science. Data must be researched, it must be interpreted, patterns of development must be noted, and opposing views evaluated. Then one takes a stand, formulates one's scientific "doctrine," relates that doctrine to the system, and publishes the findings. The movement "over the top" can enter the scientist's experience as well, and then one has a scientist who is also a disciple.

Lonergan has only sketched the fifth level of consciousness for us, leaving much of it undeveloped for those who build on his thought. The area "over the arch" is the realm of religious experience, and its direct relation to theology proper can no longer be missed. That direct relation has everything to do with the healing and creative vectors, and this is the object of Spiritual Theology. With the careful and accountable development of this theological area, credibility will once again be restored to this integrative

dynamic as it relates to the entire theological task. If Mystical Theology deals with religious experience proper, and Spiritual Theology deals with the twofold dynamism of the divine initiative and the human response that brings the human being to wholeness and full operation, and Doctrinal Theology has to do with the articulation of faith in belief statements that are vital, then we have the beginnings here of a unity with differentiation. We have indeed a "framework for creative activity," which is really our own God-given intelligence in its recurrent, cumulative, and invariant pattern. This blueprint is the legacy of Bernard Lonergan.

#### IV CONCLUSION

What might the new synthesis do for the present polarities that plague Spiritual Theology?<sup>24</sup> I suggest that these polarities must move from an *either/or* to a *both/and* framework, and that this shift must be explained in terms of the actual operation of human consciousness.

Examples of what must be done include the reconciliation of such tensions as leaving the world at times in order to love it, loving God in order to love the self, and discerning when our bodiliness is help or hindrance to authentic movement toward God and our own wholeness. The *individual* enters this movement simultaneously as part of a *communal* context, and must discern the primacy of first one context, then the next. The search for God's will implies a discernment in the present in the light of the past, not opposed to it. One's hope for the *future* is creatively constituted by our decisions in the *present*. The praxis of the truth lived in love is both start and outreach of a centered life, becoming

ever more authentic, activity delicately balanced by an alert listening, that defies the term "passivity." Justice seeks faith's commitment, and faith, ever releasing creativity, will demand the justice needed for the unfolding of full human operation. In all the tension of these

seeming oppositions, the cross becomes their intersection, and its precious burden the compassionate heart from which we seek to live authentically.

We have been given a blueprint. In whatever area of theology we find ourselves, together let us begin to build.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See I. M. Bochenski, O.P., *Contemporary European Philosophy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), pp. 1-3. For a challenging analysis of the Enlightenment, see Fred Lawrence, "The Modern Philosophic Differentiation of Consciousness or What is the Enlightenment?" in *Lonergan Workshop II* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), pp. 231-79.

<sup>2</sup>Bochenski, pp. 4-5. See also Bernard Lonergan, *Insight* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1957), pp. 339-41 for five clear distinctions between Lonergan and Kantian analysis.

<sup>3</sup>See Walter Principe's, "Toward Defining Spirituality," in *Sciences Religieuses* 12:2 (1983), p. 130. Principe provides scriptural references in footnote 17. Note the additional references.

<sup>4</sup>See Principe, p. 131 and footnote 25.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 132, and footnotes 32, 33, 34.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 133, footnote 38.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 134, footnote 43. Here Principe notes an exception in Webster's definition of spirituality. It has a direct reference to the Pauline doctrine.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 135-36.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 137-38.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>11</sup>Vernon Gregson, *Lonergan, Spirituality, and the Meeting of Religions* (Lanham, MD, New York, London: University Press of America), pp. 75-76. Gregson makes the further valuable point here that this openness is the more authentic foundation for beginning religious dialogue with non-Christian religions, despite Christianity's favoring of doctrine as the base for theology. Christian theologians must once again be called to acknowledge that doctrine itself is an articulation of the experience of God as revealed in Christ Jesus.

<sup>12</sup>See Roch Kereszty, "Theology and spirituality: the task of a synthesis," in *Communio: International Catholic Review* 10:4 (Winter, 1983), pp. 314-31, esp. p. 314. See also Edward Kinerk, "Toward a Method for the Study of Spirituality," in *Review for Religious* 40:1 (Jan., 1981), pp. 3-19 and Alan Jones, "Spirituality and Theology," *Review for Religious* 39:2 (March, 1980), pp. 161-76.

<sup>13</sup>Kereszty, p. 316.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 316-18. Kereszty includes several important references for a more thorough historical analysis of this development. See p. 317.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 318-20. William Johnston in *The Inner Eye of Love* (San Francisco: Harper and Row,

1978), p. 56, sums up the situation in these words: "... a sad situation was created some centuries after his (Thomas') death when unenlightened scholastics repeated his Trinitarian words without enjoying his Trinitarian mysticism. They grasped the conceptualization but not the enlightenment which inspired it."

<sup>16</sup>Kereszty, pp. 322-23. See also Kereszty's other references, Alan Jones, p. 171, and William Johnston, p. 43.

<sup>17</sup>See Kereszty, pp. 323-24, and 329-30.

<sup>18</sup>See Matthew L. Lamb, *Solidarity with Victims: Toward a Theology of Social Transformation* (New York: Crossroad, 1982), Chapter 3: "The Relationship between Theory and Praxis in Contemporary Christian Theologies," pp. 61-99.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 63. See also Frederick Lawrence, "Method and Theology as Hermeneutical," in *Creativity and Method: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan, S.J.* Edited by Matthew Lamb (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1981), pp. 79-104.

<sup>22</sup>See Bernard Lonergan, *Collection*. Edited by Frederick Crowe (London: Darton, Longman, and Todd, 1967), pp. 127-41. It is interesting to note the topics here and in *Second Collection* (1974) that deal with Thomistic renewal.

<sup>23</sup>See Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1971). Lonergan considers himself neither a classical Thomist nor a Transcendental Thomist in the usual sense of the name. See *Method*, pp. 13-14, and footnote. Nor is Lonergan a follower of Maréchal as is Karl Rahner. His mentors instead have been Horney, Piaget, and John Henry Newman.

<sup>24</sup>See *Collection*, p. 187. Lonergan refers us here to the *Summa theologiae* I, q. 88, a. 2, ad 3m: "... the human soul understands itself by its understanding, which is its proper act, perfectly demonstrating its power and its nature." Lonergan contrasts this with the usual Thomist approach which begins not with pre-conceptual performance, but with the experience of understanding, the analogical notion of intellect formed on the basis of sense knowledge (intellect is a spiritual eye) with difference deduced from the existence of universals. For a succinct review of Thomas' unique contribution to the being question, see Etienne Gilson's *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto:

Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952). Chapter V. For Lonergan's review of this book see *Theological Studies* 11:1 (March, 1950), pp. 122-25.

<sup>25</sup>Collection, pp. 189-92.

<sup>26</sup>See *Method*, Chapter 1.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. XII.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 19-20. See also Frederick Crowe, *Method in Theology: An Organon for our Time* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1980), p. 44.

<sup>29</sup>Crowe, p. 40.

<sup>30</sup>Bernard Lonergan, "Healing and Creating in History," *Three Lectures* (Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1975), pp. 55-68.

<sup>31</sup>For Lonergan's treatment of bias see the index of *Insight*. Lonergan identifies four types of bias: individual, group, general, and dramatic.

<sup>32</sup>J. Norman King, *Experiencing God All Ways and Every Day* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1982), p. 38.

<sup>33</sup>See *Insight*, p. 375.

<sup>34</sup>See Peter Schineller, "Tensions of an Incarnational Spirituality," in *Spirituality Today* 33:4 (Dec. 1981), pp. 340-55.

<sup>35</sup>In light of this challenge toward new beginnings in the area of Spiritual Theology, I would like to

refer the reader to the work of four authors who have already made serious contributions to this effort. Vernon Gregson has already been mentioned (see note 11). Robert Doran of the Lonergan Research Institute in Toronto has also done pioneer work that will contribute to a restored Spiritual Theology, specifically his *Psychic Conversion and Theological Foundations: Toward a Reorientation of the Human Sciences* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981). A third scholar who has contributed to this effort is James Robertson Price III of the Department of Philosophy, Georgia State University. His work, particularly, "Lonergan and Contemporary Spiritual Theology," is available from the Lonergan Research Institute. Finally, I would like to recommend the work of Tad Dunne, who has made the technical language of Lonergan so accessible to others through his own gift of clarity. I refer especially to *Lonergan and Spirituality: Towards a Spiritual Integration* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985). It is in Dunne's work that the newcomer to Lonergan's thought will find the interweaving of both of Lonergan's major works, *Insight* and *Method in Theology*. It is also to Dunne that we owe the fine pioneer work in the explanation of theological life (faith, hope, and charity) as it relates to the Lonergan framework.