LONERGAN – CONSULTATION

Topic: One Baptism, Hope, and Development
Convener: Jennifer Sanders, St. Louis University
Moderator: Brian Himes, St. Louis University
Presenters: Joseph Mudd, Gonzaga University
John Dadosky, Regis-St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology
Patrick Nolin, Regis-St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology

Three papers were presented at this session in response to a call for papers on the conference theme, One Baptism. The presentations centered on hope and ecclesial development and a fruitful discussion followed.

First, Joseph Mudd of Gonzaga University presented a paper titled "Transposing Sacramental Character: Metaphysics and Meaning in an Ecumenical Theology of Baptism." In his work, Mudd proposed transposing the traditional ancient/medieval theology of sacramental character with Bernard Lonergan's categories of meaning. He began by juxtaposing two understandings of the effects of sacraments, relying on St. Augustine of Hippo's effects of baptism and Joseph Martos's resistance to the idea that sacraments produce immediate changes because the metaphysical system that much of sacramental theology relies on is confusing. Mudd asserts that in Lonergan's concept of a world mediated by meaning, sacramental character resides outside the mind in intersubjective encounter, aesthetics, incarnate meaning, and ritual; Lonergan's categories of meaning reveal a better framework for understanding the effect of sacraments. With baptism in particular, a new principle of a higher life emerges. This principle finds its analogy in friendship with Christ, wherein the baptized actively and passively participate in Christ's death and friendship. This move toward friendship is a move away from what Martos criticizes as "magic thinking" but maintains that there is a change produced by sacraments.

Second, John Dadosky of Regis-St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology presented a paper titled "Ecclesia, Theology, and Canon Law: Reflections on a Post-Vatican II Integration." In his presentation, Dadosky addressed the place and role of canon law in the church vis-à-vis Ladislas Örsy's theological work and his incorporation of Lonergan's *Method in Theology* to his own contributions on canon law. Dadosky suggested reshaping canon law through a theology of charity and an application of Lonergan's theology. Canon law provides structure to the Catholic community of believers, and as human persons we are limited by our nature. While these limitations have created rigidity around canon law, where it is difficult to reform or change the law, Dadosky, following Örsy's interpretation, suggested Lonergan's Law of the Cross, where forgiveness is greater than retaliation. This introduces a new horizon in which orthodoxy can emerge with a more charitable shape. The theologian's task in all this is to seek understanding and guide orthopraxis. In this the theologian provides theory, and good theory will be practical while bad theory will lead to inaction.

Third, Patrick Nolin of Regis-St. Michael's College, Toronto School of Theology presented a paper titled "Transcendental Infrastructure in Creating Narratives of Hope." In his presentation, Nolin argued that Lonergan's transcendental infrastructure

for human subjectivity provides a framework for narratives on Christian hope by engaging with the work of Paul Ricœur and Robert Doran, primarily in the categories of memory and psychic conversion, respectively. Nolin summarized Ricœur's narrative as semantic innovation, where the plot in one's narrative seeks organization of events and is not mere passive remembering. The symbolic nature of the narrative gives rise to thought, which leads to a philosophy crafted by myth; this results in the assertion that there is no philosophy without presuppositions. Nolin then discussed symbols as central to understanding narrative and memory, wherein symbol interpretation needs hermeneutics to be successful. Within symbols there are both a theological nature and an archeological nature; memorial symbols are contacts of one's narrative. With this Nolin incorporated Doran's work on psychic conversion and *memoria.* Nolin stressed that Doran's understanding of *memoria* and psychic conversion is not limited to dreams and dream interpretation, but ultimately symbols. Nolin finished his presentation by tying memorial symbols with psychic conversion, which transforms those symbols and reworks one's narrative.

The discussion that followed began with the practical dimensions of the presentations. One participant asked Mudd of the practical implications of his work and he proposed lifting a theology of friendship from Lonergan's works, balancing this against the church's mission of friendship. Another participant asked to expand on friendship, and Mudd proposed adopting Jesus' life and ministry as model for friendships and building community. The proposal of friendship also fostered questions on the validity of sacraments that occur outside the church, and the benefits that a theology of friendship could give to other sacraments, such as reconciliation. Further questions centered on canon law and compassion. One participant asked how mercy plays into canon law and Dadosky replied that mercy and compassion are both needed, while another participant commented that mercy is difficult to extend when there are perpetrators of violence in the Church.

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