

The following is a draft of the first chapter of *The Trinity in History*.

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1 Constructing a New Catholic Systematics: A Vision and an Invitation¹

The subtitle of this opening chapter speaks of ‘a vision and an invitation.’ I speak of a vision, because I will present in this chapter some of the principal emphases to be found in the work that follows, where I attempt to contribute to a new Catholic systematic theology for our time. But I speak as well of an invitation: such a theology must be a collaborative enterprise, the work of a community of people building on common or complementary foundations, employing common or complementary methods, and sharing common or complementary presuppositions as to what systematic theology is and what is needed to move it forward.²

What, then, is a Catholic systematic theology? With my principal mentor Bernard Lonergan, I take as my first clue for what a Catholic systematic theology would be the statement of the First Vatican Council to the effect that reason illumined by faith, when it inquires diligently, piously, soberly, reaches with God’s help an imperfect but extremely fruitful understanding of the mysteries of faith. This understanding rests on the analogy

1 This chapter is a revised version of my 2007 Emmett Doerr Lecture at Marquette University. The lecture was published in *Philosophy and Theology* 2009.

2 I have been trying to organize such a community for some time. The most promising steps thus far have taken the form of an annual colloquium at Marquette University on ‘Doing Catholic Systematic Theology in a Multireligious World.’ The papers from the first of these colloquia as well as recordings of the proceedings may be found on the Marquette Lonergan website www.bernardlonergan.com.

of what we know naturally and on the interconnection of the mysteries with one another and with our last end. This understanding never becomes capable of grasping the mysteries in the way we can understand what lies within the proper range of our intellectual capacities, for the divine mysteries by their very nature so exceed created intellect that, even when given in revelation and accepted by faith, they remain wrapped in the veil of faith.³ As Karl Rahner once wrote, theological reason is ‘the capacity of the incomprehensible, ... the capacity of being seized by what is always insurmountable, not ... the power of comprehending, of gaining the mastery and subjugating.’⁴ With Lonergan I regard as the principal function of systematic theology the task of presenting on the level of our time such an imperfect, obscure, analogical, but fruitful understanding of the mysteries of Christian faith.

My title speaks, though, not simply of a Catholic systematic theology, but of a *new* Catholic systematic theology. And I have just referred to a theology ‘on the level of our time.’ What do these qualifications add to the notion of an imperfect and analogical understanding of the mysteries of faith?

First, drawing again on the First Vatican Council, Lonergan stresses that, while it is the same mysteries that are being understood, the understanding grows and advances down the ages.⁵ Part of what this conciliar statement entails is captured in speaking of the genetic sequence of systematic theologies.⁶ Each age has to face new questions, and

3 See Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003) 321, referring to DS 3016.

4 Karl Rahner, ‘The Human Question of Meaning in Face of the Absolute Mystery of God,’ *Theological Investigations* 18 (New York: Crossroad, 1983) 97.

5 Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 347, with reference to DS 3020.

6 See Robert M. Doran, *What Is Systematic Theology?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006) 39, 78-79, 89, 92, 144-46, 203.

in a theological appropriation of Gödel's theorem, theologians have come to see, especially over the course of the past century, that no matter how comprehensive an integrated understanding of the mysteries of faith may seem at any given time, we must expect that questions will arise either from within the system of thought itself or from human cultural development that cannot be answered on the basis of the resources already contained in the system. The sum of questions always exceeds, either actually or potentially, the sum of the resources presently available to answer them.⁷

Our age is no exception, and to the question of what is needed to bring systematic theology into our time and then to move it forward, Lonergan's basic answer was twofold.

Systematic theology must, first, be grounded in a thorough exploration of human interiority: religious, moral, intellectual, and affective. More precisely, it must be grounded in an exploration and appropriation of conversions in each of these dimensions of interiority. Lonergan stressed, of course, intellectual, moral, and religious conversion,⁸ but also expressed agreement with me on the need for, and foundational position of, a

⁷ This is emphasized especially in Lonergan's unpublished notes 'De intellectu et methodo.' These notes will be published in Bernard Lonergan, *Early Works on Theological Method 2*, vol. 23 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (forthcoming from University of Toronto Press, 2010 or 2011). For Lonergan's understanding of Gödel's theorem, see Bernard Lonergan, *Phenomenology and Logic*, vol. 18 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Philip J. McShane (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001) 49-67. For his application of it to his own cognitional theory, see Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) 19-20.

⁸ See Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, the chapters on Dialectic and Foundations.

psychic conversion.⁹ As intellectual, moral, and religious conversion overcome and heal the effects of general, group, and individual bias, so psychic conversion meets what Lonergan calls the ‘dramatic bias’ located in the subject’s repressive censorship over images that would give rise to unwanted insights and over the affects concomitant with these images.¹⁰ The foundational role of psychic conversion is most fully articulated in my *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, where the general categories of a theological theory of history depend on both intentionality analysis and a reoriented depth psychology.¹¹ As I argued in chapter 2 of that book, the key to the notion of psychic conversion lies in the recognition of the duality of human consciousness. Consciousness is psyche, and it is intentionality. If interiorly differentiated consciousness is the basis of the general theological categories that will be shared with other disciplines, then each of these dimensions of consciousness must be subjected to a process of self-appropriation involving a conversion in Lonergan’s sense of a radical shift of horizon. If Carl Jung, whose work I studied and immersed myself in as I worked out the notion of psychic conversion, did not acknowledge the intentional dimension of consciousness, many

9 See, among other places, Bernard Lonergan, ‘Reality, Myth, Symbol,’ in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, vol. 17 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005) 384-90, at 390.

10 The four biases are discussed in chapters 6 and 7 of *Insight*.

11 While the structure and dynamics of psychic conversion are presented in *Theology and the Dialectics of History*, especially in chapters 2 and 6-10, I have since come to think of the dramatic bias that psychic conversion meets at its roots as best understood in Max Scheler’s notion of *ressentiment* and in René Girard’s theory of mimetic rivalry and envy.

students of Lonergan are reluctant to acknowledge the psychic dimension (though it cannot be said that this is true of Lonergan himself).

The articulation of intellectual conversion in particular marks ‘our time.’ Advances in scientific method have made that articulation not only necessary but also incrementally possible in a new and more thorough fashion. The critical realism that appears first in Lonergan’s *Insight* and that is developed in his treatment of the methods of history in *Method in Theology* and above all in the work of Ben F. Meyer in biblical exegesis is crucial to a contemporary theology.¹² And when critical realism is applied not to exegesis or history but to systematics, it will distinguish sharply between description and explanation, and it will insist that the goal of systematics is an approximation to a hypothetical explanatory understanding.

The second emphasis that comes from Lonergan is that a contemporary systematic theology must be a theological theory of history.¹³ A new systematic theology, one that addresses the meaning of the mysteries of Christian faith in our time,

12 See Ben F. Meyer, *Critical Realism and the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 1989); *The Aims of Jesus* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2002); *Reality and Illusion in New Testament Scholarship: A Primer in Critical Realist Hermeneutics* (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier, 1994). For a succinct statement of Meyer’s appropriation of Lonergan’s interpretation theory, see his ‘The Primacy of the Intended Sense of Texts,’ in *Lonergan’s Hermeneutics: Its Development and Application*, ed. Sean E. McEvenue and Ben F. Meyer (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989) 81-131.

13 This is most clear in notes that Lonergan wrote at the time of his breakthrough to functional specialization. I have appealed to these notes in *What Is Systematic Theology?* 153-56. They may be found online at www.bernardlonergan.com, beginning at 47200D0E060.

will attempt the task of understanding God's redemptive work in human history. Other emphases – the dramatic-aesthetic insistence of Hans Urs von Balthasar, the liberation emphasis on the option for the poor, and the groundbreaking insight into the structure of evil that is contained in the mimetic theory of René Girard – have helped me think through this option for systematic theology. *Theology and the Dialectics of History* is the initial fruit of appropriating that option, laying the groundwork for the general structure of a theology of history, but I have incrementally added to the vision of a theology of history since the publication of that book.

To these two emphases from Lonergan I wish to add a third: a contemporary Catholic systematic theology has to face the challenge of articulating its understanding of the mysteries of Christian faith in the context of the multireligious and interreligious world in which we live. Concretely, this means that the central emphases in a contemporary and foreseeable Catholic systematic theology will be Trinitarian and pneumatological, without any sacrifice of the central doctrinal thrust of the Christological dogmas and of the understanding of those dogmas that can be found in the systematic theologies of Thomas Aquinas and Lonergan.

This project on *The Trinity in History* attempts to meet these three exigencies of systematic theology in our time: groundedness in affective, intentional, and religious interiority; expression in terms of a theological theory of history; and sensitivity to the interreligious context in which we are living.

In this introductory chapter I wish to discuss (1) the notion of the dogmatic-theological context, also referred to as the unified field structure, (2) the role of history, (3) the starting point (to be expanded upon in the next chapter), (4) God's love in human history, and (5) the contribution of mimetic theory.

1 The Dogmatic-Theological Context

If I say to someone, ‘You are taking my remarks out of context,’ what is meant by the word ‘context?’ ‘Context’ refers to everything else that would have to be taken into consideration if my remarks are to be properly understood. If I say to someone, ‘You are taking my remarks out of context,’ I mean that you are neglecting to consider factors that are relevant to understanding precisely what I mean, and so in effect you are misunderstanding what I mean.

In a set of lectures on ‘The Method of Theology’ delivered in 1962 at Regis College in Toronto, Lonergan introduced the notion of the dogmatic-theological context, where ‘context’ means precisely this remainder of other factors that need to be taken into consideration if given theological statements are to be properly understood.¹⁴ In these same lectures Lonergan suggested that statements within systematic theology regarding church and sacraments must be set in a context of Trinitarian, Christological, and pneumatological presuppositions. A Christian systematic theology, then, begins with the triune God and proceeds to a Christology and to a doctrine of grace, or perhaps (as will be my option) to a doctrine of grace first and then to a Christology.¹⁵ So, on Lonergan’s

14 These lectures are currently available both on audio compact discs available from the Lonergan Research Institute, Toronto, and on the website www.bernardlonergan.com beginning at 30100A0DE060; in each case the audio restoration is the work of Greg Lauzon. A transcript will appear in volume 22 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan, Early Works on Theological Method 1*, ed. Robert M. Doran and Robert C. Croken (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009 or 2010).

15 It is interesting to note that on Lonergan’s reading, while the church’s dogmatic-theological development seems to have moved from trinitarian dogma (the ‘consubstantial’) to christological development (‘one and the same’ person in two natures) and then to the doctrine of grace with the medieval breakthrough to the theorem of the supernatural, which allowed Aquinas to integrate previous speculation

account in these 1962 lectures, it is within the context of Trinitarian theology, Christology, and Pneumatology that one would develop an ecclesiology, and it is within the context of statements about the church that one would proceed to a sacramental theology. In this sense we may speak of a dogmatic-theological context of theological statements. This context emerges, not in the way of discovery, but in the order of teaching, the *ordo doctrinae*, where the emphasis is on the relations not of things to us but to one another. From the standpoint of the way of discovery, the basic context is found in the original kerygmatic message of the apostles and the church's confession of faith in the risen Lord and in the redemption wrought in his passion, death, and resurrection. It was from that context that the church's Trinitarian, Christological, and pneumatological faith emerged, and it was to that context that the church returned in settling disputes and proclaiming the faith. Moreover, it is continual return to this original font will prevent the Trinitarian and pneumatological emphases of a contemporary Catholic systematics from losing sight of the revelation of God in Christ Jesus that makes all talk of the Trinity and the Holy Spirit possible in the first place.

Now if it is the case that certain areas presuppose a context set by other areas, it would seem legitimate to assume that the parameters regarding the presuppositions that form the context are more secure than those regarding the implications of or developments upon these presuppositions. Thus, in the example under consideration, the dogmatic-theological context set by Trinitarian, Christological, and even pneumatological doctrine is more sharply defined than are the ecclesiological and sacramental matters that depend on these presuppositions. For Lonergan and for me, these parameters are, respectively, in Trinitarian theology the *homoousion* introduced at Nicea and extended to

on grace, Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* treats the doctrine of grace before it presents a systematic treatment of christological doctrine. The Trinitarian and pneumatological context of a contemporary systematic theology will, I think, have to retrieve this order.

the Holy Spirit at Constantinople I, in Christology the doctrine ‘one and the same’ of Chalcedon, and in the doctrine of grace the medieval theorem of the supernatural as applied in the thought of Thomas Aquinas to both habits and acts and as reconciled by Aquinas with earlier insights on grace as healing. The other areas that I have mentioned call for similar developments even with respect to basic doctrinal commitments. For example, there is not yet in the Church’s dogmatic-theological context something that would function in ecclesiology in the same way as the *homoousion* functions in trinitarian theology. This is very clear in contemporary discussions about the Church. No satisfactory position has yet been reached on the relation of *communio* ecclesiology to ‘people of God’ ecclesiology, on conflicting interpretations of the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council, or on conflicting views concerning the relation of local churches to the universal Church. And so on. In a discussion session at the 1962 Institute on ‘The Method of Theology,’ Lonergan singled out church and sacraments as areas calling for further doctrinal determination before an adequate systematic theology can be done in their regard, but it seems to me that we may extend this call to other areas: revelation, creation, redemption, original sin, the last things, and so on.

The position to be taken here is that these tasks demand first an updating of the basic Trinitarian, Christological, and pneumatological parameters, in the light of the three determinants of the contemporary context: interiority, history, and the world religions. Moreover, the shift to history, interiority, and the interreligious context means that even within Christology there is a great deal of new work to be done on such matters as the historical causality of Jesus, the relation of the divine and human consciousnesses and the divine and human knowledge of Jesus, and the precise meaning of the redemption wrought in Christ Jesus. Similarly, within Pneumatology there is the urgent question regarding the universal mission of the Holy Spirit and its meaning for the dialogue of Christians with representatives of the other world religions. The answers to these sets of questions, answers that we have not yet reached, will decisively alter the dogmatic-

theological context for future systematic theologies, but if these answers have been worked out in fidelity to the parameters already set in Trinitarian theology, Christology, and Pneumatology, they will alter this context, not by jettisoning previous dogmatic achievements but by adding to them. In much of the theology that has been done in recent decades there has been evident the supposition that the renewal of the parameters in Trinitarian, Christological, and pneumatological areas entails the jettisoning of the doctrinal heritage. I will not entertain such an option.

Still, it would seem reasonable to begin a systematic theology by attempting to understand and appropriate the dogmatic pronouncements that set clear parameters, and to update them in light of the exigencies imposed by interiority, history, and the interreligious situation. The first three areas to be submitted to the process of systematic articulation, then, are the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the mission of the Holy Spirit in grace. For these areas of dogmatic commitment and of systematic elaboration would seem to set the dogmatic-theological context required for a balanced presentation of all other theological topics, many of which will never receive adequate doctrinal and systematic expression until the Trinitarian, Christological, and pneumatological context is renewed.

At the same time, there is no need to repeat secure achievements in these areas. I rely, for instance, on Lonergan's Trinitarian systematics, on his original contributions to Christology in the form of a position on the human and divine consciousnesses and knowledge of Christ (one subject with two subjectivities), and on his elaboration of a systematics of grace. I intend to build on these, but I must reject the temptation to

include in the present book an extended commentary on his texts.¹⁶ Such work is not what is meant by systematics, and at present we are doing systematics.

2 The Role of History

If what I have been saying is true, however, then once the basic elements of the context have been updated, the development of theological doctrines and doctrinal parameters in the areas that are still calling for clarity – ecclesiology, sacramental theology, theologies of revelation and original sin and creation and redemption and the last things – would be one way, and perhaps the principal way, in which the church’s dogmatic-theological context will develop. It will be freed to develop by the developments in Christology, Trinitarian theology, and Pneumatology catalyzed by the exigencies of interiority, history, and the interreligious situation. The dogmatic-theological context will move forward as ecclesiology, sacramental theology, the theology of revelation, the theology of creation, soteriology, the theology of original sin, and eschatology undergo development. Moreover, if it is through work in these areas that the church’s dogmatic-theological context will develop, it is also here that systematic theology will take its next step forward, but only after the renewal and updating of the basic contextual parameters.

Now if we turn to these areas – ecclesiology, sacramental theology, soteriology, revelation, creation, original sin, and an eschatology built on the creedal affirmation of the resurrection of Jesus – we will find that the issues all have to do, in one way or another, with *God’s action in history*. In notes that he wrote in 1965 just after he made his major breakthrough to the structure of the whole of theology in terms of the

16 Some of my work interpreting Lonergan’s systematics of the Trinity will soon appear on my website: www.robertmdoran.com. This is undoubtedly background work for what I am doing here, but I do not intend to repeat it here.

functional specialization of theological operations, Lonergan assigned as the ‘mediated object’ of developing work on ‘Doctrines’ what he called ‘redemption in history,’ and as the ‘mediated object’ of a future ‘Systematics’ *Geschichte*, history, the history that is lived. In other words, as the church in its doctrinal development and theology in its systematic development build upon but also move beyond the fundamental areas of Trinitarian and Christological doctrine and the doctrine of grace and into these other areas, it will increasingly be the case that the doctrines, ecclesial and theological, that the theologian affirms will not be an unorganized list of affirmations but will already be organized into some kind of integrated pattern governed by the doctrinal affirmation that God works in a redemptive fashion in human history. The attempt to understand these doctrines will take the form of a theological theory of history, of the history that is lived and written about, that history that throughout his career Lonergan understood in terms of the three approximations of progress, decline, and redemption. In order to elevate ecclesiology, sacramental theology, soteriology, the theology of revelation, the theology of creation, the theology of original sin, and an eschatology based in the resurrection of Jesus to a status in a contemporary or future dogmatic-theological context that enjoys the clear parameters already given to the doctrines of Trinity, Incarnation, and grace, there is required in theology and in the teaching of the church itself the development of a position on the immanent intelligibility and world-transcendent finality of human history. The systematic theology of the future will be a theological theory of history.

Thus it may be claimed that the dogmatic-theological context required for this future development both of Christian doctrine and of systematic appropriation of Christian doctrine will be constituted by a systematically organized articulation that integrates renewed Trinitarian, Christological, and pneumatological commitments with a developing philosophical and theological theory of history. Against that background and in the context of statements regarding the Trinity in history, these other areas of systematic consideration – church, sacraments, revelation, redemption, creation, original

sin, and eschatology – will have room to develop. The contemporary dogmatic-theological context for further development in systematic theology will be found, then, in as thorough a treatment as possible of what we may call ‘The Trinity in History.’ The renewal and updating of Trinitarian theology, Christology, and Pneumatology will themselves launch the whole of systematic theology on the part of a theological theory of history. For (1) the primary locus for the renewal and updating of Trinitarian theology has to do with our understanding of the divine missions in history, (2) the primary locus for the renewal and updating of Christology has to do with the historical efficacy of Jesus, and (3) the primary locus for the renewal and updating of Pneumatology has to do with the role of the Holy Spirit in the whole of human history both within and outside of the context of Judaeo-Christian revelation.

3 The Starting Point

It is within the context of the preceding remarks that I would situate this book entitled *The Trinity in History*. In very brief compass, I am attempting to renew the basic dogmatic-theological context of Trinitarian, Christological, and pneumatological parameters for all other systematic-theological statements. Within those renewed parameters, the rest of systematic theology may be constructed. The renewal will be in terms of the categories provided by interiority for understanding the religious phenomenon and affirming and exploring doctrinal commitments within the interreligious situation of our time.

3.1 The Basic Hypothesis

It will come as no surprise to any who have followed my work even remotely over the past decade or so that I regard the key to the renewal of the basic dogmatic-theological parameters to lie in a statement by Lonergan about created participations in and

imitations of the four divine relations. These participations and imitations will give us the basic meaning of the phrase ‘the Trinity in history,’ and this in turn will enable us to develop a Catholic systematic theology, a systematics that at its core is Trinitarian and pneumatological, a theology that relies on the insights of Trinitarian theology, of a renewed Christology, and of a developed Pneumatology to state the meaning of Christian faith in the interreligious situation of our time.

The dogmatic-theological context that we have inherited from the tradition specifies that there are four real divine relations: paternity, filiation, active spiration, and passive spiration. It affirms that three of these – paternity, filiation, and passive spiration – are really distinct from one another by opposed relations of origin and are identical with the three divine persons – respectively, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The fourth divine relation, active spiration, is identical with the Father and the Son as together they ‘breathe,’ ‘spirate’ the Holy Spirit.¹⁷

Lonergan’s development upon this inherited statement of part of our dogmatic-theological context affirms that to each of the divine relations there corresponds in history a created participation in and imitation of divine life. Through that development he has managed to link Trinitarian theology with Christology and the theology of grace in a manner that is more systematic, in my view, than anything else that has been achieved in the long history of Christian theology.

These participations in and imitations of the divine relations constitute what I mean by speaking of the Trinity in history. Lonergan’s hypothesis reads:

¹⁷ These statements are explained in intricate detail in Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics*, vol. 12 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) 230-305.

... there are four real divine relations, really identical with the divine substance, and therefore there are four very special modes that ground the external imitation of the divine substance. Next, there are four absolutely supernatural realities, which are never found uninformed,¹⁸ namely, the secondary act of existence of the incarnation,

18 The editors of the Collected Works volume on the systematics of the Trinity appeal in a footnote to a passage in Lonergan's 'De ente supernaturali,' Thesis 3, in an effort to explain what is meant by 'never found uninformed.' That passage is currently being prepared for publication, and it now reads in English translation a bit differently from the translation that was given in *The Triune God: Systematics* (though the meaning is the same):

'Only charity is meritorious per se; the other virtues or their acts can be informed or uninformed. They are informed by sanctifying grace and charity, and when sanctifying grace departs they become uninformed and cease to be meritorious.

'For this reason it seems worthwhile to distinguish between absolutely supernatural acts that are formally supernatural and absolutely supernatural acts that are virtually supernatural. The former attain God as he is in himself, while the latter do not attain God as he is in himself but only in some respect, as in the case of faith and hope.' An earlier translation is given in *The Triune God: Systematics* at 471. The editors comment that the point of Lonergan's remark here is that the four absolutely supernatural realities are formally supernatural, and necessarily so. For the created correlate of divine communication or divine self-giving is that the creature should attain God as God is *in se*. For that to happen, there must be a created external term that functions as a consequent condition of the truth of the proposition that affirms the divine self-communication. (We will see more about this requirement shortly.) The hypothesis names these created external terms consequent conditions. (The translation

sanctifying grace, the habit of charity, and the light of glory. It would not be inappropriate, therefore, to say that the secondary act of existence of the incarnation is a created participation of paternity, and so has a special relation to the Son; that sanctifying grace is a participation of active spiration, and so has a special relation to the Holy Spirit; that the habit of charity is a participation of passive spiration, and so has a special relation to the Father and the Son; and that the light of glory is a participation of sonship, and so in a most perfect way brings the children of adoption back to the Father.¹⁹

3.2 *An Earlier Statement of the Hypothesis*²⁰

This 1957 statement of the hypothesis²¹ was not the first appearance of this systematic synthesis in Lonergan's work, though it was the first published instance of it. The hypothesis makes an earlier appearance in notes that Lonergan composed for a course on sanctifying grace at the Jesuit Seminary in Toronto in 1951-52, where it is explained

of 'De ente supernaturali' is by Michael Shields, and will be published in *Early Latin Theology*, Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan 19.)

19 Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 470-73.

20 This subsection is a revised version of a paper that I wrote for and delivered at the West Coast Methods Institute, Loyola Marymount University, April 2009. The paper was entitled 'The Four *Entia Supernaturalia*: Expanding the 1957 Hypothesis with Earlier Course Notes.'

21 The hypothesis appeared originally in Lonergan's 1957 *Divinarum personarum conceptio analogica* (Rome: Gregorian University Press).

more fully than in the published version.²² There follows here, then, a summary statement of the relevant features of those notes.

The notes are divided into three sections: (1) a set of historical points, (2) a treatment of the biblical basis of the doctrine of sanctifying grace, and (3) a systematic synthesis regarding that doctrine. I can treat the historical notes only very briefly and the scriptural notes only partially, though both are well worth a great deal more attention.

In the historical notes, Lonergan is concerned with connecting the steps that led to the Lutheran and Reformed positions on justification. He roots these positions in the confrontationalism and conceptualism of Scotus and in subsequent nominalist and voluntarist doctrine. His concern in the section seems to be almost exclusively to set up a context that calls for a review of what the scriptures say about justification and salvation, which, he claims, cannot support the Lutheran and Reformed positions. That review follows immediately, and then heads him into the systematic treatment of the issue.

The scriptural notes begin with a synthetic statement of the biblical basis for the notion of habitual or sanctifying grace, which as such does not appear in scripture. The point to the biblical notes in the context of these course notes is to present a basis for the Catholic understanding of justification, over against Lonergan's interpretation of the Lutheran and Reformed traditions. The synthetic statement of biblical doctrine reads as follows, in translation.

²² These notes have the archival designation A205 in the Lonergan archives at the Lonergan Research Institute in Toronto, and can be found on the website www.bernardlonergan.com at 20500DTL040. One important page of these notes has been mistakenly relocated in the archives as the first page of A160 (16000DTL040 on the website).

(1) Those whom God the Father loves as he loves his only begotten Son Jesus (2) he gifts with the uncreated gift of the Holy Spirit, so that, (3) reborn (4) into a new life, (5) they might become living members of Christ. By this gift, they, (6) the justified, (7) the friends of God, (8) the adopted children of God, (9) the heirs in hope of eternal life, (10) enter into participation in divine life.

Every one of these ten points, Lonergan maintains, has a firm biblical basis, and he supports that claim with abundant references. Taken together they provide the scriptural warrant for the later doctrine of habitual or sanctifying grace. ‘Sanctifying grace’ or ‘habitual grace,’ then, is a synthetic category that unites these ten features, which themselves are abundantly present in the scriptures. The systematic part of the treatise shows how the biblical doctrine that Lonergan has expressed in this synthetic statement is possible.

Already in the biblical notes, Lonergan is making systematic statements. These statements relate directly to the biblical data the Aristotelian framework for the emergence of the notion of sanctifying grace. Thus, not only is the specific character of habitual or sanctifying grace found in its unifying capacity with respect to the ten features of the biblical synthesis, but also Lonergan draws a parallel to Aristotle’s notion of the unifying capacity of ‘anima’ vis-à-vis habits and operations of various kinds, and so he links the notion of sanctifying grace as an entitative habit rooted in the essence of the soul to the biblical texts that he is synthesizing. As the soul is to the potencies of the soul and the habits rooted in them and the operations that flow from the habits, so sanctifying grace is to the various features synthesized in the statement of biblical doctrine, all of which constitute an elevation of the natural life of the human person into participation in divine life. These various features will later, in the systematic part of the treatise, be organized in a way that parallels, at least roughly, the Aristotelian relations of soul to potencies, potencies to habits, and habits to operations. This same Aristotelian framework

demands that the specific character of sanctifying grace be distinct from the specific character of the virtue or habit of charity, which is a more proximate principle of operations rooted not in ‘anima’ but in the will, that is, in one of the faculties or potencies of the soul.

If I may take a moment to introduce an issue that will return later, it is true that the distinction between sanctifying grace and charity arose within and was required by the Aristotelian metaphysical framework. A question that abides to this day is whether the replacement of the Aristotelian framework with a methodical analysis of religious interiority will demand or even support this distinction. I have voiced and will continue to voice support for the permanence of the distinction, while those who appeal to a three-point rather than a four-point statement of the divine self-communication regard the distinction as unnecessary.²³ In the context of Lonergan’s early systematic statement ‘De ente supernaturali,’ the distinction, while affirmed, is said not to be essential for the doctrinal point that there exists a created communication of the divine nature, a created, proportionate, and remote principle whereby there are operations in creatures through which they attain God as he is in himself. But the fact that the affirmation or negation of the distinction does not affect the doctrine does not mean that it is not important systematically.²⁴ The issue is whether the systematic significance survives the shift of metaphysics from the foundational position it enjoyed in Aquinas to the derived function it plays in a methodical theology.

This issue will return later. For the moment, let me simply indicate that it is in his comments on the first two elements of the biblical synthesis that Lonergan begins to introduce categories that will be developed in the systematic portion. These two elements

23 See the discussion between Charles Hefling and myself in the September 2007 issue of *Theological Studies*.

24 See Lonergan, ‘De ente supernaturali,’ the end of thesis 1.

are also the points most relevant to my present concern, and so I can limit my treatment of Lonergan's biblical notes to these features. The two elements, again, are: (1) Those whom God the Father loves as he loves his only-begotten Son Jesus (2) he gifts with the uncreated gift of the Holy Spirit.

3.3 The Father Loves Us as He Loves the Son

The first affirmation in the synthetic statement is that 'there are those who are loved by the Father as the only-begotten Son is loved by him.' This affirmation is based on John 17.20-26, and especially verses 23 and 26, but Lonergan goes on to explain it in terms of Thomas Aquinas's discussion of love, where a distinction is drawn between essential and notional love in God.²⁵

The key texts from John read: '... I in them and you in me, that they may be perfectly one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me' (17.23)²⁶ and '... that the love with which you have loved

25 For those unfamiliar with traditional terminology in Trinitarian theology the term 'notional' can be confusing. It refers to the personal properties of the divine persons, precisely as that by which we *know* each of them as distinct from the others. 'These divine attributes are called "notional," not as if they were conceptual beings, but because they cause the divine persons to be known as distinct from one another.'

Bernard Lonergan, *The Triune God: Doctrines*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Robert M. Doran and H. Daniel Monsour (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009) 413.

26 Jerusalem Bible translates vs. 23 differently: 'With me in them and you in me, may they be so completely one that the world will realize that it was you who sent me and that **I have loved them** as much as you loved me.' The specific Trinitarian meaning that Lonergan develops is lost in the JB translation. While the Greek ἡγάπησας

me may be in them, and I in them' (17.26). Pauline texts are cited as well, but between the Johannine and Pauline texts, Lonergan introduces systematic categories from Aquinas to elucidate the point, and even more to set up his later systematic discussion.

The main point of Lonergan's theological commentary on this section, drawing on Aquinas, is that the special love by which God draws us into participation in the divine life is to be understood as *effected* by essential divine love but as immanently *constituted* in terms of the notional divine acts. Divine love does not find us good until it has made us good, and this it does through 'gratia gratum faciens,' the grace that makes us pleasing to God. That grace, as caused by God, is the effect of the essential divine love common to the three divine persons, but it establishes in us distinct relations to each of the divine persons and a distinct participation in the divine life of each of them.

3.4 The Gift of the Holy Spirit

The second affirmation contained in the general synthetic statement of scriptural teaching tells us just why and how this is the case. The affirmation is to the effect that the Father gifts those whom he loves in this way with the uncreated gift of the Holy Spirit. Again, both John and Paul are cited in support, with numerous texts from each, including Romans 5.5, which became Lonergan's principal text on the issue. Aquinas is appealed to again in Lonergan's theological interpretation. From *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 38, aa. 1 and 2, Lonergan draws the following. A divine person can be given if the person belongs to another divine person by origin; and a divine person can be had by a rational creature

supports Lonergan's reading, Raymond E. Brown's translation and notes in the Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday, 1970, 768-69) acknowledge textual evidence for each reading; but Brown prefers the reading on which Lonergan is basing his argument.

joined to God, provided the divine person has been given to the rational creature by the person or persons to whom that person belongs by origin. Then the rational creature ‘becomes a sharer in the divine Word and in the proceeding Love, so that she has at her disposal a power to know God and to love God rightly.’²⁷ The divine person that is properly called “Gift” is the Holy Spirit, since the first gift responsible for all other gifts is love, and the Holy Spirit proceeds in God precisely as Love.

The gift is a mission of the Holy Spirit to all who are ‘participes gratiae.’ And for Thomas, ‘A divine person is said to be sent if that person exists in a new way in someone, and is said to be given if that person is possessed by someone. And neither of these occurs except in accord with (“secundum”) the grace that makes one pleasing to God (“gratia gratum faciens”).’²⁸

In a sense, the essential issue in the systematic treatment is the meaning of that difficult Latin word ‘secundum.’ What precisely is the relation between the uncreated gift of the Holy Spirit and the created ‘gratia gratum faciens?’ Aquinas tells us that ‘two things must be considered in the one to whom the mission happens: indwelling by grace and something new brought through grace.’²⁹ The relation between those ‘two things’ has been a matter of dispute.³⁰

For Lonergan, the explication of the relation takes the following course. First, the Spirit is given to us insofar as the Spirit is had by us, and this posits a change, not in the

²⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 38, a. 1.

²⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 43, a. 3.

²⁹ Ibid. a. 6.

³⁰ Karl Rahner elucidated the dispute in his famous article ‘Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace,’ *Theological Investigations*, vol. 1, trans. Cornelius Ernst (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1961) 319-46. His solution is different from Lonergan’s.

Holy Spirit nor in God but in us. For whatever is predicated contingently of God is true through extrinsic denomination.³¹ That change in us is denoted by the term *gratia gratum faciens*, and it is understood in terms of something being given to us, created in us, that renders us pleasing to God. The statement that the Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit could not be true, were it not for this change in us. For anything predicated contingently of God, while constituted by the divine perfection, demands, if it is truly predicated, that there be a created external term as consequent condition of the truth of the statement that makes the predication. In this case the created consequent condition is *gratia gratum faciens*, the pure gift of a grace that changes us by giving us a participation in divine life.

Thus, *gratia gratum faciens* makes us pleasing to God in this special way because it is a created share in God's own life, that is, in the divine Word and in the proceeding Love, as Aquinas said in q. 38, a. 1. More precisely, that *gratia* is the created term of a new relation to the Holy Spirit, and so the Holy Spirit is given to us precisely as the uncreated term of a created relation founded in the grace that elevates us to participation in divine life.

Third, for this reason, in the four-point hypothesis *gratia gratum faciens*, sanctifying grace, will be said to be a created participation in and imitation of the divine relation that we call active spiration. Why? Because that is the uncreated relation of the Father and the Son together to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit proceeds as Love (*Amor procedens*) precisely from their loving (*notionaliter diligere*). Thus, what makes us pleasing to God is that we have been given a share in the relation to the Holy Spirit that is the Father and the Son breathing the Holy Spirit, the relation where the Son is precisely *Verbum spirans Amorem*, the Word that breathes Love. That change in us is simultaneously the created term of a created relation to the Holy Spirit that makes it

31 Again, we will see more about contingent predication about God shortly.

possible for us to say truly that the Holy Spirit is sent to us by the Father and the Son and dwells in us as the uncreated term of that created relation.

Fourth, that change is also what has come to be called sanctifying or habitual grace, whose specific character is here portrayed in terms of its unifying the various elements described in the scriptures that are synthesized in Lonergan's 10-point statement of biblical doctrine.

Fifth, the Holy Spirit, to whom we are related anew and in a special way by *gratia gratum faciens* participating in active spiration, is a Proceeding Love in God who is in turn related to the Father and the Son. The Spirit is a passive spiration that in its proper character is nothing but Love. Thus, charity will be our created participation in the Holy Spirit, a change in us, a created relation to the Father and the Son, a change that proceeds from the unification that is *gratia gratum faciens*, through divine favor finding, indeed making, us pleasing to God. So even here, in his comments on the synthetic statement of biblical doctrine, Lonergan is setting up the need for a twofold terminology for the reality of the divine indwelling when that indwelling comes to be explained systematically. And he is doing so in a context that is at least in principle independent of the Aristotelian metaphysical framework.

What is the new framework that could support that continued distinction? The richness of Lonergan's reflections on scripture in the notes that he wrote in 1951-52 leads me to ask, as I asked in an earlier article entitled 'Consciousness and Grace,'³² whether to speak of the methodical transposition of the category of sanctifying grace in terms of 'being in love with God,' or more precisely, in terms of an otherworldly being-in-love that is without conditions or qualifications or restrictions or reservations, as Lonergan

32 Robert M. Doran, 'Consciousness and Grace,' *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 11:1 (Spring 1993) 51-75.

does,³³ is perhaps too compact. To me those expressions connote our participation through charity in the relation to the Father and the Son that is the Holy Spirit, but do not satisfactorily convey the participation in the created relation that makes it be true that the Holy Spirit is precisely *given* to us as a term of a relation; that is, it does not convey ‘*gratia gratum faciens*’; it does not adequately convey the ‘making pleasing’ that for me is better articulated biblically in 1 John 4.10 and 4.19 than in Romans 5.5, which leaves itself open to an interpretation that misses the point:³⁴ ‘This is the love I mean: not our love for God, but God’s love for us when he sent his Son ... We are to love, then, because he loved us first.’ More needs to be done to articulate the experiential emphasis relevant to sanctifying grace, an element that will have something to do with the literal meaning of ‘*gratum faciens*,’ with being on the receiving end of a divine love that makes us pleasing to God by giving us a created participation in divine life in the form of a created relation to the Holy Spirit that shares in the uncreated relation of active spiration and that releases in us the love for God in return, the charity that is a created relation to the Father and the Son and a created participation in and imitation of the Holy Spirit.

The genius of some of the best directors of the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises* is reflected in the way they begin by asking the exercitant to meditate on scriptural passages that could enkindle in one the sense of being on the receiving end of divine love, just as Ignatius himself ends the *Exercises* with a contemplation for obtaining the love of God in return. And in another aside let me add that, while I was composing this material, I came across the following from Diadochus of Photice in the Divine Office for Friday of the

33 See Lonergan, *Method Theology* 289.

34 The misinterpretation is shown when the passage is taken to refer to *our* love for God rather than *God’s* own love. The meaning is clearly the second, and Lonergan recognized that; but even Lonergan’s own reading of Romans 5.5 has been misunderstood.

Second Week in Ordinary Time: ‘Anyone who loves God in the depths of his heart has already been loved by God. In fact, the measure of a man’s love for God depends upon how deeply aware he is of God’s love for him. When this awareness is keen, it makes whoever possesses it long to be enlightened by the divine light, and this longing is so intense that it seems to penetrate his very bones. He loses all consciousness of himself and is entirely transformed by the love of God.’ That passage reflects a mystical intensification of the set of relations offered in grace to all men and women at every time and place. These relations would constitute the ‘special basic relations’ that for some reason are left out of the following central methodological passage in *Method in Theology*: ‘... general basic terms name conscious and intentional operations. General basic relations name elements in the dynamic structure linking operations and generating states. Special basic terms name God’s gift of his love and Christian witness. Derived terms and relations name the objects known in operations and correlative to states.’³⁵ The special basic relations are the created participations in the divine relations of active and passive spiration, through being on the receiving end of God’s love in *gratia gratum faciens* and loving God in return in charity.

3.5 Contingent Predication about God

I have already mentioned the requirements of contingent predication about God. Before we go any further, it would be best to explain more fully what I mean.

Let us take the statement, ‘God knows, wills, and effects the universe to exist.’ The truth of that statement is a contingent truth. It does not have to be true; it simply is true. What is required for that statement to be true? The existence of the universe affirmed in the statement, ‘God knows, wills, and effects the universe to exist,’ is

35 Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 343.

constituted by the divine intelligent intention to create the universe, and by that alone, and yet there is also required a created consequent condition if the statement under consideration is to be true, namely, the existence of the universe. An analogous structure of constitution and condition is required if we are to understand the divine missions, the sending of the Son and the Holy Spirit, the missions that in effect are the Trinity in history.³⁶

Let us begin with the mission of the Word. The divine Word, the Son sent by the Father, is incarnate in the human being Jesus of Nazareth. What is required for that affirmation to be true?

First, sending and being sent are opposites: the Father sends while the Son is sent. Now the inherited dogmatic-theological context informs us that the only way in which opposites can be predicated of the divine persons is in terms of relations of origin, relations immanent in the triune God. And so the statement that the Father sends the Son and that the Son is sent by the Father cannot be true unless it is a function of the eternal relation of origin by which the Son proceeds from the Father. What is required for our affirmation to be true, what is required for the mission that the statement affirms, is first, then, the eternal divine procession of the Son from the Father.

36 On contingent predication about God, see Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 438-47. For more detail, see Bernard Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, vol. 7 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) 90-99. On the material for this and the next subsection, see Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 446-79. See also Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ* 106-55.

Second, nothing else is required to *constitute* the mission affirmed in the statement that the divine Word, the Son sent by the Father, is incarnate in the human being Jesus of Nazareth. We are talking about a relation that is immanent in the infinite God, and surely nothing more is required than God's own infinite perfection as constitutive reason of anything that is a function of that relation. Aquinas, Lonergan, and von Balthasar all agree that there is a very definite sense in which the mission of the divine Word *is* the procession of the divine Word.³⁷

And yet, third, the affirmation 'The divine Word, the Son sent by the Father, is incarnate in the human being Jesus of Nazareth' expresses also something that cannot be accounted for by the eternal procession of the Word alone. That something else is not constitutive of the mission affirmed in the statement but is a created consequent condition required if the affirmation of the mission is to be true. There is an incarnation, the incarnation is in the human nature derived from Mary, and the incarnation is the incarnation of the divine Word, of the Son, alone. These three statements are true. We hold their truth in faith. But their truth is contingent: it did not have to be this way. The procession of the divine Word immanent in the Godhead is not contingent. It is a dimension of God's necessary being. It alone is constitutive of the mission affirmed in the statement, a mission which in a very definite way is identical with the procession. But the mission of that Word in history is thoroughly contingent, and so an affirmation that affirms it requires a created condition. Just as the statement, 'God knows, wills, and effects the universe to exist,' requires nothing more to constitute its truth than the divine

³⁷ The basic statement is Aquinas's position on the divine missions as given in *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 43. For von Balthasar, see his *Theodrama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 3: *Dramatis Personae: Persons in Christ*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992) 157. For Lonergan, see chapter 6 in *The Triune God: Systematics* passim. The latter is by far the fullest account of the matter.

intelligent intention, and yet the truth of the statement requires as a created consequent condition the existence of the universe, so the affirmation that the divine Word is incarnate in Jesus requires nothing more to constitute its truth than the eternal relation of origin of the Son from the Father, and yet the truth of the statement requires a created consequent condition.

What is that created consequent condition? That created condition is not simply the created humanity of Jesus. My humanity and yours are created by God, and yet it is not true that the divine Word, the Son sent by the Father, is incarnate in us. The created condition is called by Lonergan in the 1951-52 notes *gratia unionis*; and in *The Triune God: Systematics*, it is called *esse secundarium incarnationis*. In *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ* that created grace is spoken of in terms of or in reference to the real *relation* of the created humanity of Jesus to the divine Son alone. There Lonergan speaks of a created substantial act that is related to the person of the Son of God, an act that both perfects the obediential potency of the human essence so that it is actually assumed by the Son of God and constitutes the external term whereby this contingent fact is true, namely, that the Son of God has actually assumed this human nature. It is not enough to speak in terms of a real created relation. In the order of creation, relation is always the relation of some term to another term.³⁸ While Lonergan affirms that the real relation of the assumed nature to the Son alone is the external, created, contingent, appropriate term that guarantees the three contingent truths that (1) there is an incarnation (2) in the nature received from Mary (3) of the eternal Word of God, still a real relation is possible only when a real foundation for that relation exists. That foundation has to be a supernatural substantial act that is received in a substantial individual human nature in such a way that that nature *cannot* receive the substantial act

38 The paper of mine cited in note 1 above and the lecture on which it was based were not sufficiently clear on this point.

of existence to which it is naturally proportionate: it receives a 'secondary' act to which it is not naturally proportionate, one that is absolutely supernatural. The Word did not assume a human person but a human nature. Hence there must be ruled out from the assumed human essence that substantial act or act of existence to which that essence is naturally ordered and proportionate. As a natural potency the human nature of Christ is not actuated, and so although by its essence there is potentially here a subsistent finite being, that subsistent finite being never actually came to be, since the subsistent being that is Jesus of Nazareth is the eternal Son of the Father. As obediential potency the human nature is indeed actuated, but as the nature assumed by the Word. There is a substantial supernatural act received in Christ's human essence that is the foundation of the real relation of the assumed nature to the Word alone. This 'secondary act of existence' is required, not for the human essence of Christ to be real, not for the existence of that essence, not as the constitutive cause whereby Christ the man exists, nor as some intermediary linking and uniting the divinity and humanity, not as the grace of union constituting the union, but only as the grace of union required by and consequent upon the constitutive cause of the union. 'In the hypostatic union there is present besides the infinite act of existence of the Word a secondary substantial act of existence as a term received in Christ's human essence, just as in the justification of a sinner besides the uncreated gift of the Holy Spirit there is also present as a term sanctifying grace received in the soul as an accident, and in the beatific vision in addition to the divine essence, which in a way fulfills the function of an intelligible species, there is just such a term in the light of glory.'³⁹ Without the real created relation of the assumed humanity to the eternal Word, a relation founded in that secondary act of existence of the assumed

39 Bernard Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, vol. 7 in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, trans. Michael G. Shields, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) 152-55.

humanity, it would not be true that there is an incarnation of the divine Word in Jesus, that the complete humanity of Jesus is the complete humanity of the divine Word.⁴⁰ Thomas Aquinas, and Lonergan following him, expressed the created term of that created real relation in the metaphysical term *esse secundarium incarnationis*, the secondary act of existence of the assumed human nature. That term, while I believe it is accurate, should not distract us from the main point, namely, that what is important here is the real *relation* that that term makes possible, the created relation of the humanity of Jesus to the eternal Word of God, making it be true that the complete humanity of Jesus is the complete humanity of the divine Word. Without that created relation the affirmation with which we began would not be true.

Now in a statement that appears in Lonergan's Trinitarian theology, this real relation of the assumed humanity to the Son alone is also a created participation in and imitation of a *divine* relation, and surprisingly or counter-intuitively at first, that real divine relation is the relation of paternity.⁴¹ The humanity of Jesus is a participation in and imitation of the Father. That hypothesis – and as a statement proper to systematic theology it is nothing more than a hypothesis – expresses the kind of Christology that from a scriptural standpoint is most apparent in the Gospel of John but that is not absent from the synoptic Gospels, and in fact could even be argued to provide a kind of theological context for the more elemental portrayal of Jesus in the synoptic Gospels. 'The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees the Father doing; and whatever the Father does the Son does too. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he does himself' (John 5.19-20). 'My teaching is not from myself: it comes from the one who sent me' (John 7.16). 'To have seen me is to have seen the Father' (John 14. 9). Etc., etc., etc. Again, the divine Word immanent in the Godhead does not

40 See Bernard Lonergan, part 4 passim.

41 See Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 470-73.

speak; the immanent divine Word is spoken; in technical theological language, its notional act is not *dicere*, to speak, but *dici*, to be spoken. But the incarnate Word speaks. And he speaks only what he hears from the Father. The relation of the assumed humanity to the person of the divine Word alone is also a created participation in and imitation of the Father's real relation to the Son, a participation in and imitation of the relation to the Son, the *Dicere*, that we call paternity. 'The Trinity in History' begins with this hypothetical affirmation, this 'first thesis,' if you will: *the secondary act of existence grounding the relation of the assumed humanity of Jesus to the eternal divine Word is in our history a created participation in and imitation of the Father's eternal relation to the Word that the Father eternally speaks.*

We will return to this affirmation shortly, embellishing it with considerations from the text of Lonergan's 1951-52 notes. But first, we will see the meaning of this hypothesis more clearly in terms of history if we move on to our next consideration.

Here we consider another affirmation of faith: The Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son. Nothing more is required for the mission to be *constituted* than the relation of origin according to which the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son. There is a very definite sense in which the mission of the Holy Spirit is the procession of the Holy Spirit. But as with the mission of the Son sent by the Father, so here too the mission of the Holy Spirit sent by the Father and the Son is contingent and temporal, and so it requires an appropriate created external term, not as constitutive of the mission affirmed in the statement 'The Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son' as a consequent created condition of the truth of that affirmation. Without that created external term the proposition 'The Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son' would not be true.

What is the relevant created external term? Again, the relevant created external term is expressed in relational terms, but in this case two created relations are entailed.

There are two relevant created external terms of the mission of the Holy Spirit, and they are relational, in the sense of mutually opposed relations of origin.

First, we may presume that the Holy Spirit is sent as what the Holy Spirit is. Just as the Son is sent as the Father's divine Word, so the Holy Spirit is sent as proceeding Love, the Love spirated, breathed, by the Father and the Son in an eternal spiration through which the Father and the Son love themselves and one another and us precisely in the Holy Spirit.⁴² The Holy Spirit is thus sent as a special divine Love through which *we* are enabled to love with a love that participates in and imitates God's own love.⁴³ That created love is what our inherited dogmatic-theological context has called charity. And so the appropriate created external term is charity, a created share in God's own proceeding Love. Charity is a created participation in and imitation of the divine relation of passive spiration, that is, of the Holy Spirit.

But that divine relation is a relation to the Father and the Son, who together are active spiration breathing the Love that proceeds from their mutual interrelation. And so, Lonergan says, 'although the Spirit alone according to his proper perfection is gift, still, since to give one's entire love is the same as to give oneself, and since the Father and the Son give their entire proceeding Love, they also give themselves and therefore are said to come and dwell in [us].'⁴⁴ And so charity as created participation in and imitation of the Holy Spirit is grounded in and proceeds from a created supernatural participation in and imitation of the Father and the Son as they breathe the Holy Spirit. This divine relation is what the theological tradition calls active spiration. So while charity is the created supernatural participation in and imitation of passive spiration, that is, of the Holy Spirit,

42 See *ibid.* 473, 475.

43 *Ibid.* 481.

44 *Ibid.* 471.

the divine Gift, charity proceeds in us from a created supernatural participation in and imitation of active spiration, of the Father and the Son together.

What is the latter participation and imitation? It is what traditional theology has called sanctifying grace.⁴⁵ Sanctifying grace is the created supernatural participation in and imitation of Father and Son, *Agapē* and Word, as together they ‘breathe,’ spirate the proceeding Love that is the Holy Spirit. Father and Son are divine *Agapē* and its Word, its Logos, its Judgment of Value, its *Verbum spirans Amorem*. Sanctifying grace is conceived as a created participation in and imitation of the divine *Agapē* and its Word, as from these together a proceeding Love is breathed forth. What is breathed forth from sanctifying grace is charity, the love of God above all things and in all things and the love of neighbor as ourselves, the gift of fidelity to the two greatest commandments. As the Holy Spirit is the *Amor* that proceeds from divine *Agapē* and its *Verbum spirans Amorem*, so charity proceeds from the created participation in and imitation of the Father and the Son together breathing the Holy Spirit.

Now if we ask the question, Why are the Son and the Holy Spirit sent? we come closer to beginning to understand the role of history in the development of a systematic theology. Sanctifying grace is understood by Christians mainly as a created participation in and imitation of the incarnate Word, the incarnate *Verbum spirans Amorem*, whose assumed humanity is itself a participation in and imitation of the one Jesus called ‘Abba, Father.’ And what is this ‘Father’? What would it be to participate in the incarnate Son, who himself is an imitation of ‘Abba’? What would the charity be that proceeds from that participation? ‘Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be children of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on the bad as well as the good, and his rain to fall on honest and dishonest alike’ (Matthew 5.44-45). Again, just a few verses later, ‘You must therefore be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect’

45 See Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 289.

(Matthew 5.48), where being perfect means this nonviolent response to evil, this return of good for evil. It is in this participation and imitation alone that history is moved beyond the otherwise endless cycle of violence, recrimination, judgment, blame, accusation, murder, hate, and false religion. So this habit of grace, rooted in the essence of the soul (as traditional theology would put it), sets up a state of grace, where the state of grace is a historical and social situation, a set of intersubjective relations where charity prevails.⁴⁶ The founding subjects, as it were, are the three divine subjects, and grace prevails because they have come to dwell in us and with us. That state of grace is manifest in charity, in the disposition to return good for evil, which is a created participation in and imitation of the passive spiration that is the Holy Spirit. As recent theologians have developed the notion of social sin, so it is time for contemporary theologians to develop the notion of social grace. The foundation of that notion lies in the intersubjective relations that prevail once the divine Trinity has in fact enabled us to participate in and imitate the very life of God through sharing in the divine relations of active and passive spiration. Those intersubjective relations take their measure, as it were, from the gift of a dialectical attitude that returns good for evil.⁴⁷ And as my Australian colleague Neil Ormerod has seen in his own reflections on these same matters, this charity that is our created participation in the mission of the Holy Spirit is also the foundation of our own mission to spread the kingdom of God in this world.⁴⁸ ‘As the Father has sent me, so I also send you,’ says Jesus, and the foundation of that sending is the gift of the Holy Spirit in charity that proceeds from our participation in the Father and the Son who do the

46 On the distinction between the habit of grace and the state of grace, see Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 512-21.

47 See Lonergan, *Insight* 721-22.

48 Neil Ormerod, ‘Contingent Predication and the Four-point Hypothesis,’ unpublished paper delivered at the Melbourne conference on Lonergan’s *Insight*, September 2007.

sending. It is here, I suggest, that we will find the basic parameters for a doctrine and a theology of the church, once the dogmatic-theological context has been established in a renewed Trinitarian theology, Christology, and Pneumatology.⁴⁹

Finally, in the same hypothesis the light of glory that is the created consequent condition of beatific knowledge is conceived as the created supernatural participation in and imitation of filiation, of the Son, the divine Word, as in the Holy Spirit he brings us, his brothers and sisters, children by adoption, perfectly back to the Father. We may conceive the disposition of hope that flows from the gift of God's love as our present historical participation in this ultimately eschatological relation. We will return to these affirmations in due time.

3.6 The Systematic Synthesis in the 1951-1952 Notes

We have reviewed very briefly the historical portion of Lonergan's 1951-52 notes on sanctifying grace, and have examined that part of his biblical reflections that is relevant to our present concern. The systematic synthesis towards which the historical and biblical considerations are heading shows *how* it can be true that sanctifying grace unifies the various elements mentioned in the synthetic statement of biblical doctrine. Lonergan's answer is in terms of formal effects, and the consideration of formal effects is intimately connected with what we have just said about contingent predication.

The notion of formal effects provides a general answer to the question, What true judgments can be made once one knows a formal intelligibility of some sort? In this case, the formal intelligibility is the entitative habit known as sanctifying grace, and the true

49 For elements in the heuristic structure of such an ecclesiology, see chapter 5 in my book *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), entitled 'The Community of the Servant of God'

judgments that can be made once one posits that intelligibility name formal effects that have to do both with the person gifted with sanctifying grace and with the God who gives the gift. The latter judgments concern what is truly said of God as the term of the relations that are established with the gift of *gratia gratum faciens*. In all instances, these judgments about God are contingent predications.

With respect to divine love, these judgments can be concerned either with divine love considered essentially or with divine love properly attributed to one or other divine Person. Divine love insofar as it is an *effective* principle is predicated essentially and so equally of the three divine persons. A corollary of this fundamental theorem is that every grace, insofar as it is related to divine love as its effective principle, is related not to notional but to essential divine love. And if such love is predicated of one divine person, excluding the others, that predication is not proper but by appropriation.

However, not everything that is predicated contingently of the divine persons is predicated by appropriation; and not everything that is predicated of the divine persons in respect to grace is predicated by appropriation. The mission of a divine person is predicated properly, not by appropriation, for one person sends and another is sent, and the one who sends is not sent and the one who is sent does not send. This applies to the missions of the divine persons with respect to *gratia gratum faciens*.

It is at this point that the four-point hypothesis makes perhaps its first appearance in Lonergan's work. There are four graces to which the word 'grace' applies in a preeminent way: the grace of union, the light of glory, sanctifying grace, and the habit of charity.

As we have seen, the grace of union is that finite reality received in the humanity of Christ so that it exists through the personal act of existence of the divine Word. This grace is the external term in accord with which it is truly said, 'The Word became flesh.' *Summa theologiae*, 3, q. 17, a. 2, is referred to, and the issue there is settled in terms of relation ('habitus'). '... by the human nature there accrued to Him no new personal

being, but only a new relation of the pre-existing personal being to the human nature (*nova habitudo esse personalis praeexistentis ad naturam humanam*), in such a way that the Person is said to subsist not merely in the divine but also in the human nature.’

The light of glory is that finite reality by which a created intellect is disposed to receive the divine essence as intelligible species and so to see God as God is in God’s own self.

Sanctifying grace is that finite reality by which a finite substance is reborn and regenerated to participate in divine life itself.

The habit of charity is that finite reality by which a finite regenerated substance habitually possesses true friendship with God.

The ontological foundation of these four is grounded in exemplary causality, a point not mentioned as such in the later expression of the four-point hypothesis, even though it is implicit in the references to imitation. The divine essence is the first exemplary cause which every finite being, whether created or ‘creatable,’ substantial or accidental, imitates. But the divine essence can be considered in two ways: insofar as it is absolute and common to the three divine persons, and insofar as it is really identical with one of the real divine relations, whether paternity or filiation or active spiration or passive spiration.

Since every finite substance has something of absolute reality about it, it can be said to imitate the divine essence considered insofar as the divine essence is absolute and common to the three divine persons. But since the four preeminent graces are intimately connected with immanent divine life, they can appropriately be said to imitate the divine essence insofar as the divine essence is identical to one or other divine relation.

Thus the grace of union imitates and in a finite manner participates divine paternity, the light of glory imitates and in a finite manner participates filiation, sanctifying grace imitates and in a finite manner participates active spiration, and the habit of charity imitates and in a finite manner participates passive spiration. For the

moment I must pass over much of the material here, which is more abundant than in the later expression of the hypothesis, in order to concentrate on the way in which Lonergan argues that the ten elements presented in the synthetic statement of biblical doctrine are unified by the notion of sanctifying grace. For that is where we are locating our starting point.

Sanctifying grace, Lonergan has just stated, is a participation in the divine relation of active spiration. He now proceeds to argue for the synthetic unity of the biblical elements by showing how each of these elements can be understood as a formal effect of that participation in active spiration that is sanctifying grace: first, immanent formal effects and then transcendent formal effects.

There are primary and secondary immanent formal effects and primary and secondary transcendent formal effects. With each of these I will put in parentheses the number in the synthetic statement of biblical doctrine that corresponds to a particular formal effect of sanctifying grace.

Primary immanent formal effects are what can truly be said of a subject because of what is intrinsically constitutive of that subject. There are two intimately related primary immanent formal effects of sanctifying grace, that is, two predications that can truly be said of us because of the gift of a participation in active spiration. First, it makes the one who has it a participant in divine life (10), for it imitates active spiration, and so establishes a special relation to the Holy Spirit (2). Second, simultaneously, as it were, it makes one pleasing to God, able to be loved with a special divine love (1).

The explanation of the second of these primary immanent formal effects is very interesting to me from the perspective of what I said in 'Consciousness and Grace.' Since active spiration is the principle of the Holy Spirit, it is also the principle of proceeding divine Love itself. But the principle of love, says Lonergan, is lovableness, and therefore active spiration is God as lovable. The divine goodness as the principle of love is the divine goodness as lovable. Therefore, because sanctifying grace imitates active

spiration, it imitates God insofar as God is lovable; it imitates the divine goodness in breathing love; and so it makes the one who possesses it lovable with a special divine love (1). Thus there returns the central theme of God's love for us, in connection with sanctifying grace.

Secondary immanent formal effects are what can truly be said of a subject as distinct, necessary consequences of what is intrinsically constitutive of that subject. In this sense the infused virtue of charity, by which one is habitually a friend of God (7), is a secondary immanent formal effect of sanctifying grace. Again I am reminded of 1 John 4.19: We are to love, because God has first loved us. As active spiration stands to passive spiration, so sanctifying grace stands to charity. And as sanctifying grace imitates active spiration, so the virtue of charity imitates passive spiration, love that flows forth because it is the resultant of divine *notionaliter diligere*. Active spiration stands to passive spiration as principle stands to its resultant, and so sanctifying grace, *gratia gratum faciens*, stands to charity as a principle stands to its resultant. Besides, active and passive spiration are really distinct, correlative, inseparable, and equal. Therefore, sanctifying grace and charity are really distinct; they are correlative and inseparable, in that with the infusion of grace, charity is also infused, and when charity is lost, so is grace; and they are equal: the measure of grace in a person is the same as the measure of that person's charity.

Other secondary immanent formal effects of sanctifying grace are relative to one's state in life. For example, in those living on earth, faith and hope (9) would be secondary immanent formal effects of sanctifying grace.

There are also mixed immanent formal effects of sanctifying grace. They are introduced in the text without explanation of what is meant by 'mixed,' but that term means, I think, that they include both primary and secondary immanent formal effects. Thus, a first instance of these mixed effects is regeneration or rebirth (3) into a new life (4). Regeneration here means the arrival of a new nature to an existing person, a new first

and remote principle of operation and new proximate principles of operation. Through sanctifying grace there comes to an existing rational creature primarily that grace itself which is the first and remote principle of operating supernaturally and meritoriously, the reciprocal relations to the Holy Spirit and to the Father and the Son, but secondarily the infused virtues and gifts which are the proximate principles of a supernatural life.

Another mixed immanent formal effect of sanctifying grace is that a rational creature is justified (6) with that justice of God by which God makes us just. There are several dimensions to that justice of God. We will have to skip over the details of this analysis, except for the first: justice is primarily truth (*Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 21, a. 2), not as simply existing in the intellect but as existing in the intellect and directing and moving the will. Thus the justice of God is the Word spirating love, which of course is active spiration.

So much for sanctifying grace considered in its immanent formal effects. Another major section considers sanctifying grace in its transcendent formal effects, effects that are truly said of one subject, in this case God or one or other of the divine persons, because of what is intrinsically constitutive of another subject or because of what flows from what is intrinsically constitutive of another subject, that is, us. This is where contingent predication becomes essential to the methodological integrity of the discourse.

Whatever is said of God contingently is said not entitatively but terminatively, that is, of God as the term of a created relation. Many things are said of God contingently in the order of sanctifying grace, and so there exist transcendent formal effects of sanctifying grace.

These transcendent formal effects are of two kinds. For sanctifying grace can be considered as an effect of divine love, since it is out of love that God produces grace in a person, and it can also be considered as a term of divine love (for God loves the person made pleasing).

The transcendent formal effects of sanctifying grace as itself an effect of divine love regard essential divine love. All three persons are equally one effective principle of every creature whatsoever. And so this effective divine love is predicated equally of all three persons. And love that is predicated equally of all three is essential love. But the transcendent formal effects of sanctifying grace as terms are related to notional divine love. This assertion is proposed as probable with an intrinsic probability; for what Scripture and the Fathers say about the various relations of the divine Persons to the just seem to postulate that grace be a term of notional divine love. Arguments to the contrary put forth by theologians, in Lonergan's view, do no more than prove that grace not as a term but as an effect is related to essential divine love.

Thus, a transcendent formal effect of sanctifying grace in Christ as a human being is that the Father loves the Son as a human being with that notional love that is the Holy Spirit, that is, Gift. The Father eternally and necessarily loves the Son as God by the Holy Spirit. In time and contingently the Father loves the Son as a human being by the Holy Spirit. This fact, being contingent, requires an appropriate external term. This appropriate term is nothing other than sanctifying grace in Christ, for it imitates extrinsically that active spiration whereby the Father loves. Eternally and by reason of his procession the Holy Spirit is Gift. In time and contingently the Holy Spirit is given to this particular person, Jesus of Nazareth. This fact, being contingent, requires an appropriate external term; and this appropriate term is sanctifying grace, for it imitates active spiration and therefore establishes a special relation to that passive spiration which is the Holy Spirit. (All of this is background to statement 1 in the biblical synthesis.)

Again, the transcendent formal effects of sanctifying grace in us represent systematic articulations of the elements contained in the synthetic statement of biblical doctrine. God the Father loves us with a love that is similar to that with which he loves Christ the man (1). By sanctifying grace we become adopted children of the Father (8). Therefore we are heirs, with the hope of eternal life (9). One who is truly adopted is made

an heir. But our adoption now is incomplete, and will become complete with eternal life; therefore ‘with hope.’ Adoptive sonship means being made like God’s natural Son. Through sanctifying grace we are made like the Son as the Word spirating love (active spiration). Through the light of glory we are like the Son as Son, the Word begotten by the Father. The list continues: those who have been justified live as members of Christ (5), a point to which Lonergan devotes quite a bit of attention. The relation of Christ the Head to his members is also spelled out in some detail, which we must skip.

Another transcendent formal effect of sanctifying grace in the justified is that the Holy Spirit, existing from eternity as uncreated Gift, in time becomes the Gift given to the justified (2). Lonergan repeats his explanation, after commenting on some biblical passages: What is given to someone is possessed by that person. The just possess the Spirit insofar as this uncreated Gift is given to them through grace. Further, grace is the appropriate external term of this donation because it externally imitates active spiration and therefore possesses a proper relation to uncreated passive spiration. But the Spirit is had by participation through infused charity. For the virtue of charity externally imitates passive spiration, which is the Holy Spirit. Finally, in terms of fruition the Spirit is possessed insofar as through grace the just habitually have a true knowledge of God and a proper love for him.

Another transcendent formal effect of sanctifying grace in the justified is that the Father and the Son send and give the Holy Spirit to the justified person (2). Galatians 4.6: ‘God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”’ John 14.16: ‘And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever ...’ John 14.26: ‘... the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name ...’ John 15.26: ‘But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father ...’ John 16.7: ‘I will send him to you.’ This mission and giving express both the eternal procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son and the temporal term that makes it possible for us to say that the Father and the Son send and give the

Spirit and that the Spirit is sent and given. Since grace is the term of proceeding Love, it is the appropriate term according to which the Father and the Son are said to be sending and giving. Therefore, the three divine persons dwell in the souls of the justified. Accordingly, the three equally produce grace in the justified. And so they are present according to the same norm as that by which God is present in all things. This means that grace is a term of essential love. And so all give themselves, inasmuch as 'to give' means a free communication of oneself.

But grace is also a term of notional love. The Father is present as sending and giving; the Son is present as sent and giving; and the Spirit is present as sent and given. Accordingly, grace is the first intrinsic principle of supernatural life. And so in terms of fruition the divine Persons are possessed insofar as they are truly known and rightly loved. There is friendship in the true sense of the word between God and the justified (7). Friendship is a mutual love of benevolence founded upon an exchange of good(s). This friendship is founded upon the communication of the divine nature of God himself. It is benevolent love on the part of God, for grace is the term of both essential and notional divine love. It is also benevolent love on our part, for the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us [Rom 5.5].

In short, the ten features of the biblical synthesis proposed in the scriptural portion of the notes under scrutiny are explained systematically in terms of formal effects, immanent or transcendent, of the *gratia gratum faciens* that is the created participation in divine active spiration.

4 God's Love in Our History

The social dimensions of grace of which I spoke earlier would be fleshed out, as it were, in a theology that would articulate the constitution of what Jesus preached and inaugurated as the reign or kingdom of God. In order to spell this out in a bit of detail, I

want to spend the rest of this chapter discussion the other major component of the dogmatic-theological context that I am suggesting, the notion of history, and particularly mission in history.

My notion of history can be found in the theory of history expressed in my book *Theology and the Dialectics of History*. I want here only to point out the way in which the matters that I have been speaking about thus far relate to the components of historical process discussed there.

In *Method in Theology* Lonergan presents an ascending scale of values, where the scale itself is based on the degree of self-transcendence to which we are carried in our responses to different kinds of values. Lonergan writes,

... we may distinguish vital, social, cultural, personal, and religious values in an ascending order. Vital values, such as health and strength, grace and vigor, normally are preferred to avoiding the work, privations, pains involved in acquiring, maintaining, restoring them. Social values, such as the good of order which conditions the vital values of the whole community, have to be preferred to the vital values of individual members of the community. Cultural values do not exist without the underpinning of vital and social values, but none the less they rank higher. Not on bread alone doth man live. Over and above mere living and operating, men have to find a meaning and value in their living and operating. It is the function of culture to discover, express, validate, criticize, correct, develop, improve such meaning and value. Personal value is the person in his self-transcendence, as loving and being loved, as originator of values in himself and in his milieu, as an inspiration and invitation to others to do likewise. Religious values, finally, are at the heart of the meaning and value of man's living and man's world ...⁵⁰

50 Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 30-31.

In my own work, I have posited two sets of relations among the various levels of value, one 'from below' as it were and the other 'from above.' Very briefly and schematically we may say that problems at the more basic levels give rise to questions that can prompt transformations at the more complex levels, and that these transformations are required in order to meet the problems that arose at the more basic levels. Thus, problems regarding the equitable distribution of vital goods will be met by adjustments at the level of social values: technological, economic, and political adjustments or changes in peoples' spontaneous intersubjectivity, or both. Those adjustments, however, may well call for adjustments in the sets of meanings and values informing peoples' ways of living, that is to say, at the level of cultural values. The transformation of cultural values depends on people striving for self-transcendence in all they do. And consistent self-transcendence is not possible without God's grace. Conversely, then, the gift of God's grace is the condition of personal value, which itself conditions the emergence of the genuine cultural values that in turn are required for a just social order assuring the equitable distribution of vital goods to the entire community. The gift of God's grace that is the ultimate base is understood in terms of the created participations in and imitation of God that occur in sanctifying grace and the charity that flows from it.

Lonergan has spoken of the structure of history in terms of the simultaneous interplay of the forces that make for progress, those that head to decline, and those that redeem from decline. In a very schematic articulation he writes: '... [the] first approximation [to the structure of history] was that [people] always do what is intelligent and reasonable, and its implication was an ever increasing progress. The second approximation was the radical inverse insight that [people] can be biased, and so unintelligent and unreasonable in their choices and decisions. The third approximation was the redemptive process resulting from God's gift of grace to individuals and from the

manifestation of his love in Christ Jesus.’⁵¹ My own work complicates that structure a bit, to argue that being intelligent and reasonable on a communal or collective level means the integral functioning of the scale of values, that the spread of bias leads to a breakdown in the relations among the various levels of the scale, and that the gift of God’s grace affects not only the individual in his or her intelligent, reasonable, and responsible living but, through the scale of values, the entire community in its collective responsibility for a good of order that is truly good for all and not only for some. That gift will stretch people to the self-sacrificing charity that refuses to return evil for evil, to the nonviolent love that returns good for evil, that prays for enemies, that prays for the gift to be able to forgive, that seeks the truth that alone can lead to reconciliation, and that fosters understanding of what God is doing in our midst. This is what constitutes charity and distinguishes it from the natural love that we have for one another and even for God. Such charity is not only a function of the gift of God’s grace but a created participation in and imitation of the Holy Spirit, a participation and imitation breathed forth in us by the Father’s and the Son’s giving of their own love that elevates us to participation in trinitarian life, precisely as we respond to being sent, to being on mission, as Jesus responded to his own being sent by the Father. It is in these terms that I would transpose into a contemporary systematic-theological context the meaning of that reign of God that Jesus himself both preached and inaugurated.

There is a great deal that could and should be said to fill out these last few paragraphs, but I must move on. Needless to say, I will return to these matters in fuller contexts.

5 The Contribution of Mimetic Theory

51 Bernard Lonergan, ‘*Insight Revisited*,’ in *A Second Collection*, ed. Bernard J. Tyrrell and William F.J. Ryan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 272.

I have been setting the dogmatic-theological context for theological advance, and I have maintained that this context lies in a set of created supernatural relations that imitate and participate in the divine relations. From this context I have already suggested that the basic parameters for advance in ecclesiology are to be found in the notion of mission, of the church as mission, or more precisely of the church as servant of God on mission from Jesus. ‘As the Father has sent me, so I send you – I send you on mission so that, participating in the divine relations, you may extend to the ends of the earth the message of a love that enables human beings to love even their enemies.’ The final piece to which I want to call attention in this very schematic overview of a vision for a contemporary Catholic systematic theology is the mimetic theory of René Girard. If grace in history is a matter of created imitations of the divine relations, then perhaps sin in history is a matter of quite different kinds of imitations leading to destructive and violent relations.

Lonergan, as we have just seen, indicates that the root by default, as it were, of decline in human affairs lies in bias, and I have come to see in the last several years the intimate relationship between the mimetic theory of René Girard and Lonergan’s notion of bias. I was originally put onto this relationship by a couple of papers delivered at Lonergan Workshops by Professor John Ranieri of Seton Hall University.⁵² Briefly, sensitive desire is not peculiar to the individual but is, to use Girard’s neologism, interindividual, a function of the priority of the social over the individual. For Girard, the dramatic or emotional or psychic form of bias is a function of the mimetic character of human desire. What occurs at the level of the passive undergoing of our desires and fears, our delights and sorrows, our joys and sadness, is mimetic. Many, perhaps most, of our

⁵² John Ranieri, ‘Individual Bias and Group Bias: A Girardian Reading,’ unpublished paper delivered at the Boston College Lonergan Workshop, June 2003; ‘Girard, Lonergan, and the Limits of Common Sense,’ unpublished paper delivered at the Second International Lonergan Workshop, Toronto, August 2004.

desires are not autonomous or innate, but copied from others. ‘If I desire a particular object, I do not covet it on its own merits but because I “mimic,” or imitate, the desire of someone I have chosen as a model. That person – whether real or imaginary, legendary or historical – becomes the mediator of my desire, and the relationship in which I am involved is essentially “triangular.”’⁵³

Now mimesis in itself (or in the abstract) is neutral. But *acquisitive* or *appropriative* mimesis leads to violence, whether overt or covert. Acquisitive mimesis, focused on the object because of the model or mediator, becomes conflictual mimesis when the object drops out of sight and the subject becomes concerned only or at least primarily with the model or mediator. What we are calling the ‘object’ can be located at or related to any of the levels of value in the scale of values. Conflictual mimesis is contagious. It can infect a community, an institution, a governing body, a religious establishment, and it can endanger the welfare and even the survival of the groups it affects, at least until the focus turns on one individual or group, namely, the scapegoat, whose immolation, exclusion, or expulsion brings a precarious peace. ‘It is better for you,’ said Caiaphas, ‘to have one man die for the people than to have the whole nation destroyed’ (John 11.50). Such is the basic schema that governs much of Girard’s thinking.

Moreover, in Girard’s view, which I find persuasive, there is a progressive revelation in the biblical texts of precisely this set of mimetic mechanisms, which finally become unveiled for all to see – and so lose their power – in the crucifixion of Jesus. This liberation is one element of the salvation that the cross and resurrection of Jesus effect.

⁵³ Richard Golsan, *René Girard and Myth* (New York: Routledge, 2002) 1. Golsan’s book is an excellent introduction to Girard’s work. Also recommended are Chris Fleming, *René Girard: Violence and Mimesis* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2004) and Michael Kirwan, *Discovering Girard* (Cambridge MA: Cowley, 2005).

Perhaps through Girard's help we will come to see it as the central element in soteriology, and perhaps also we will see appropriative mimetic desire as the basic element in original sin. And so again, perhaps we have a glimpse of how the dogmatic-theological context can go forward as we move into this new age of theology.

Girard's work obviously raises the question of a radical ontological desire that itself is not mimetic but that is involved in all mimetic desire. Imitative desire is brought on by a sense of spiritual inadequacy that is endemic to the human condition. Perhaps we might say that the story of imitative desire is a story of the successes and failures of *mutual self-mediation*⁵⁴ as we attempt together to find the completion of our being, a completion that is possible only by reason of a supernatural participation in divine life itself. Mimetic violence, which springs from imitative desire, is the fate of mutual self-mediation gone wrong. But there is also healthy mutual self-mediation, and it begins in the mutual self-mediation of the Trinity in history with us through the gift of grace.⁵⁵ What enables one to renounce mimetic rivalry, without using this renunciation as a feigned indifference that is just another way to get what one wants, is precisely the gift of love that enables us to want and to strive to be perfect in mercy and forgiveness as our heavenly Father is perfect. Perhaps it is precisely here, in the realm of contaminated human relationships and the forgiveness that alone transcends them, that we have the

54 See Bernard Lonergan, 'The Mediation of Christ in Prayer,' in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1958-1964*, vol. 6 of *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 174-76. I am indebted to conversations with Gilles Mongeau for these connections.

55 To speak of 'mutual self-mediation' vis-à-vis the Trinity is not to posit a process notion of God. As Lonergan is reported to have responded once to the question, Do we make a difference to God? 'We make an eternal difference to God.'

clearest indication that we are going to find as to whether our love is God's love and so truly without conditions, reservations, restrictions, or qualifications.

The theological significance of Girard's work is momentous. The original temptation is represented in the Book of Genesis as awakening a desire to be like God (or like gods). The first murder recorded in the bible is prompted by mimetic rivalry. The Gospels of Mark and Matthew tell us that Pilate knew that the reason the chief priests had handed Jesus over was out of jealousy (Mark 15.10, Matthew 27.18). Even an extraordinarily insightful exegete, N.T. Wright, does not emphasize this verse and the dynamics that it reflects as much as I believe he should in his otherwise brilliant discussion of 'The Reasons for Jesus' Crucifixion.'⁵⁶ Raymund Schwager has made what I regard as essential contributions to the same overall project that Wright and the late Ben F. Meyer have so laudably begun, precisely because he does take these emphases seriously.⁵⁷ Lonergan was on the same track, I believe, without having studied Girard's work, and I think this is reflected especially in his recognition of the importance of Max Scheler's book *Ressentiment*, which captures some of the same dynamics without yet having caught on to mimesis as the engine that drives them.⁵⁸ I support the efforts of John Ranieri to rearticulate Lonergan's theory of the biases with the help of Girard's mimetic theory. Those like James Alison who have turned to Girard for an understanding of what

56 See Wright's book *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), and especially chapter 12.

57 See Raymund Schwager, *Jesus and the Drama of Salvation*, trans. James G. Williams and Paul Haddon (New York: Crossroad, 1999). See also Schwager, *Must There Be Scapegoats? Violence and Redemption in the Bible*, trans. Maria L. Assad (New York: Crossroad, 1987). For Meyer, see above, note 12.

58 See Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 33.

the Christian tradition means by ‘original sin’ are also right on the mark.⁵⁹ If all of these statements are true statements, then any systematic theology that purports to be a theological theory of history must take Girard’s work with utmost seriousness. If the imitation of God that Jesus means when he says, ‘You must therefore be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect’ (Matthew 5.48), and that Lonergan anticipates when he refers to sanctifying grace and charity as created imitations of the divine relations of active and passive spiration, means what Jesus says it means, then it is set directly over against the deviated transcendence that is rooted in acquisitive mimesis. For being perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect means precisely ‘Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be children of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on the bad as well as the good, and his rain to fall on the honest and the dishonest alike’ (Matthew 5.44-45). God creates in grace the imitation, the mimesis, that is truly life-giving, and that imitation, that mimesis, is an imitation of, in fact even a created participation in, the divine relations themselves. Grace too is interindividual, and I suspect and hope that one of the principal theological developments of this still very young century will be the understanding of just how this is so.

These emphases permeate the work that follows. The theology I propose here can be developed only collaboratively. No single person can create a systematic theology. One can only point out the direction to be taken and take whatever steps in that direction God gives one the strength and insight to take. The book that follows claims no more than that.

59 See James Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin through Easter Eyes* (New York: Crossroad, 1998). See also Raymund Schwager, *Banished from Eden: Original Sin and Evolutionary Theory in the Drama of Salvation*, trans. James Williams (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2006).