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## 6 Autonomous Spiritual Procession: Lonergan's Early Analogy

The autonomous spiritual processions that are most pertinent to an analogical theological understanding of Trinitarian mystery are processions of act from act within the expanded horizon of consciousness cleared by the gift of God's love: the procession of a set of judgments of value that include one's own self-constitution, judgments flowing from the evidence grasped by a person consciously on the receiving end of unqualified love, and the acts of love that habitually flow from the cooperation with that gift which makes for a habitually converted mentality. But another analogy is required even for the theological understanding of these acts, for they are themselves within the supernatural order. The other analogy, probably more fully articulated in Lonergan's *The Triune God: Systematics* than anywhere else in the theological tradition, appeals to processions of act from act in the spiritual operations that are natural to us, that is, in the dimensions of understanding, judgment, and decision. This is still a very generic statement, however: as we will see, there are *specific* processions of act from act that are more relevant or pertinent than others. While it is true that the notable examples of procession of act from act in human consciousness are the procession of a hypothesis from an act of direct understanding, the procession of a judgment of fact from a reflective act of understanding, the procession of a judgment of value from an act of existential ethical insight, and the procession of a decision from the combined principle of existential ethical insight and judgment of value, still we must find greater specificity than this if we are to present an acceptable remote analogical hypothesis that will help us understand the created participations in the divine relations, which then offer a more proximate analogy for understanding the divine processions.

With this as our agenda, we propose in this chapter to follow Bernard Lonergan through the first assertion in *The Triune God: Systematics*. For us, however, the analogy presented there suits proximately an understanding not of the divine processions themselves but of the supernatural, graced participation in those processions that is named by the four-point hypothesis. It is that graced participation and indeed created imitation that will give us our proximate analogy for some obscure understanding of what divine procession might be. This chapter will be followed, then, by another that concentrates on the proximate analogy.

Lonergan's first assertion in trinitarian systematics reads: 'The divine processions, which are processions according to the mode of a *processio operati*, are understood in some measure on the basis of a likeness to intellectual emanation; and there does not seem to be another analogy for forming a systematic conception of a divine procession.'<sup>1</sup>

To anticipate what is a difficult discussion, we may say (1) that we profess in faith that *God proceeds from God* (Son from Father, Holy Spirit from Father and Son); (2) that these processions, as processions of God from God, are, metaphysically speaking, processions of *act from act*; (3) that the act that is principle and the act that proceeds *cannot be absolutely distinct acts*, for then there would be three gods; (4) that the

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1 Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 145. In Latin: 'Processiones divinae, quae sunt per modum operati, aliquatenus intelliguntur secundum similitudinem emanationis intelligibilis; neque alia esse videtur analogia ad systematicam conceptionem divinae processionis efformandam.' Ibid. 144. An earlier version of the first assertion appeared in *Divinarum personarum* in 1957 and 1959. See *The Triune God: Systematics* 764-81. I have studied the difference between the two assertions. See [www.robertmdoran.com](http://www.robertmdoran.com), Text, Commentary on *The Triune God: Systematics*, 'Divine Processions as Intelligent Emanations,' §8, 'Comparison of Chapter Two with *Divinarum Personarum*.'

distinction must then be a *distinction of opposed relations* in the one act that is the absolute reality of God; and (5) that we can reach an analogical, mediated, and imperfect understanding of how this can be by *likening it to certain processions* within our own consciousness, namely, those processions that are processions of act from act; but since these analogues are all examples in which the act that is principle and the act that proceeds are absolutely distinct acts (*processiones operati*), we must qualify the analogy in some way so as to indicate the difference of the divine processions. They are, if you will, ‘along the lines of’ a *processio operati* in human consciousness, but they also differ, in that the distinction of the act that is principle and the act that proceeds must not be a distinction of absolutely distinct acts but of opposed relations. This is the meaning of *per modum operati*. Furthermore, as we shall see, the relevant processions have to do with our *existential self-constitution*, where the procession of a judgment of value from existential ethical grasp of sufficient evidence for the judgment, *precisely with regard to what it would be good for the existential subject to do and especially to be*, is the analogue for the procession of the Son, and the procession, from that grasp and that judgment operating together as a single principle, of loving decision to do and to be precisely that, is the analogue for the procession of the Holy Spirit. In other words, while he does not use the language explicitly at this point, Lonergan is taking his analogy from the ‘existential moment’ in which ‘the individual ... comes to find out for himself that he has to decide for himself what to make of himself.’<sup>2</sup> Again, the analogy is taken from what in one place Lonergan calls the fifth degree of self-transcendence, ‘the point where

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2 Bernard Lonergan, ‘A Post-Hegelian Philosophy of Religion, *A Third Collection*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1985) 213. See also *Method in Theology* 240: ‘So we move to the existential moment when we discover for ourselves that our choosing affects ourselves no less than the chosen or rejected objects, and that it is up to each of us to decide for himself what he is to make of himself.’

we discover that it is up to ourselves to decide for ourselves what we are to make of ourselves, where we decisively meet the challenge of that discovery, where we set ourselves apart from the drifters.’<sup>3</sup> We are speaking, then, of a process of ‘existential autonomy’ (a term that is used explicitly in this context in *De Deo Trino: Pars systematica*),<sup>4</sup> of act proceeding from act precisely in the realm of that rational self-consciousness which Lonergan began to unpack in chapter 18 of *Insight*.

Some terminological issues are worth mentioning at this point. Subsequently to *Insight*, which was basically completed in 1953, the context for the discussion of the existential autonomy of rational self-consciousness gradually (very gradually) expanded. This is reflected partly in the development of Lonergan’s vocabulary for speaking about the relevant operations, and especially about that operation that would become the analogue for the divine Word.<sup>5</sup> By the time he proposed the first extended version of the analogy, in the text *Divinarum personarum* of 1957, that operation had become something called (in one brief spot in the text) *iudicium practicum seu iudicium valoris*, a practical judgment or judgment of value. That language does not appear in this context in *Insight*. The first mention in *Insight* of judgments of value occurs in chapter 20, in the context of the discussion of belief, where the expression ‘judgment of value’ arises in such a way that, unless one did the necessary research, one would think he had spoken of judgments of value in so many words earlier in the book.<sup>6</sup> He had not. The judgment that

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3 Lonergan, ‘A Post-Hegelian Philosophy of Religion’ 208.

4 See Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 176-79.

5 I called attention to Lonergan’s development on this issue above, in chapter 2, ‘The Starting Point,’ note 34, and in chapter 3, ‘Initial Issues,’ note 37.

6 ‘The third act, then, is a judgment on the value of deciding to believe with certitude or with probability that some proposition certainly or probably is true or false. As any judgment, it proceeds with rational necessity from one’s own grasp of the virtually

is part of the source or originating act of a decision is not given any special name in the discussion of these matters in chapter 18. It is not even called a practical judgment, much less a judgment of value. Mention is made of ‘the practical insight’ and of ‘practical reflection,’ but the latter leads to a ‘practical’ knowing in which ‘one can grasp the virtually unconditioned and thereby attain certitude on the possibility of a proposed course of action, on its agreeableness, on its utility, on its obligatoriness.’ The word ‘judgment’ is not used to speak of this ‘practical knowing,’ for the point that Lonergan is making is that there is no ‘internal term’ to the practical reflection; its term is external to the process, lying as it does in the decision itself. More precisely, ‘Insofar as it is a

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unconditioned, and it posits precisely what is grasped as unconditioned. As any judgment, it may be true or false, for the investigation leading up to the judgment may or may not have been free from the undue influence of desires other than the pure desire to know, and again, one may or may not be insufficiently or excessively exigent in determining the presence of the virtually unconditioned. However, it differs from judgments of fact and from theoretical judgments, for it settles a question of value; and it differs from other judgments of value, for it is concerned not with the good of the senses nor with the good of the will nor with the good of the whole man nor with the good of society but simply and solely with the good of intellect. Moreover, it is concerned not with the good of intellect in general but with a particular belief. Accordingly, it presupposes that it is good for intellect to reach the unconditioned through its own inquiry and reflection, that it is good for intellect to communicate to others the unconditioned that it has reached, and that it is good for intellect to accept from others the unconditioned that they have reached. But the judgment of value now under discussion goes beyond these generalities to pronounce upon the value of accepting from others in a determinate instance what they communicate as unconditioned.’ Lonergan, *Insight* 730.

knowing, it can reach an internal term,' but 'insofar as this knowing is practical, insofar as its concern is with something to be done and with the reasons for doing it, the reflection has not an internal but an external term; for the reflection is just knowing, but the term is an ulterior deciding and doing.' By the time of *Divinarum personarum* in 1957, the internal term of the practical reflection is called *iudicium practicum seu iudicium valoris*, which in *De Deo Trino: Pars systematica* (1964) becomes simply *iudicium valoris*.<sup>7</sup> But even then, the expression is used only once, in the definition of 'spirans' ('spirating') in assertion 2: 'the principle of intellectual emanation inasmuch as that principle is determined by both the act of understanding and the consequent word, when that word is a judgment of value.'<sup>8</sup> The expression does not occur in the earlier, and key, section on 'existential autonomy' (which did not appear at all in *Divinarum personarum*): '[autonomy] is exercised in the existential sphere insofar as one asks about oneself, understands what kind of person one ought to be, judges how one can make oneself that kind of person, and from all of this there proceeds an existential choice through which, insofar as one is able here and now to do so, one makes oneself to be that kind of person.' In fact, not only is the expression 'judgment of value' not employed here; the judgment that is spoken of is in fact *not* a judgment of value but a practical judgment: one 'judges how one can make oneself that kind of person,' not that it would be good for one to be that kind of person. The appearance of a judgment of value in the processions of act from act that constitute the analogy is fleeting in the early Trinitarian work. Lonergan is not yet quite 'there' in his position on judgments of value and their distinctness vis-à-vis judgments of concrete fact, judgments on speculative understanding, and practical judgments. However, since he does employ the expression

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<sup>7</sup> See Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 180-81. For the reference in *Divinarum personarum*, see *ibid.* note 24.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

once in this context, in the definition of ‘spirans,’ we will refer to the human inner word that is the analogue for the divine Word in Lonergan’s earlier analogy as a judgment of value.

### **1 *Per Modum Operati***

Here begins the difficult discussion that I just referred to. Some readers may want to follow Lonergan in taking a long run at the determination of the meaning of *per modum operati*. Others may find this part of the presentation tedious. I don’t think it can be omitted.

First, then, the definition of ‘procession,’ the origination of one from another (*origo unius ex alio*),<sup>9</sup> is too abstract to be of much help. Concretely, there are different modes or kinds of procession, as the examples of processions *ad extra* and *ad intra*, sensitive procession, procession of an operation (from potency to act), and autonomous spiritual procession of act from act have already indicated.<sup>10</sup> More fully, the mode or kind of a procession can be conceived, determined, and spoken of in a number of ways, and some of these combine different and more limited manners of conceiving a procession. Some examples follow. It helps to get straight what Lonergan is doing in these examples, since they determine the nature of the analogy that he is pursuing. Especially if he is correct that this is the best or even the only kind of analogy that will satisfy the requirements of rigorous systematic theological reflection, then following him through what might seem to be a tedious list of distinctions could help prevent mistakes down the line. And so we proceed with his details.

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<sup>9</sup> Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 144-45.

<sup>10</sup> See chapter 3 above, ‘Initial Issues.’

(1) If we conceive a procession in terms of the principle and what proceeds from it, we are giving it what Lonergan calls an *external* determination, where the use of the word ‘external’ means ‘one from another.’ That is, ‘external’ does not here refer necessarily to a procession *ad extra*. It does not refer immediately to a procession at all, but to a determination, a manner of speaking about any procession, whether the procession be *ad extra* or *ad intra*. If what is emphasized is ‘one from another’ then the determination is external. ‘Inner word from insight’ is an external determination in this sense, even though the procession to which it refers is not *ad extra*.

(2) If we speak of the manner in which the procession occurs – it is forced or coerced, on the one hand, or natural, on the other; it is conscious or unconscious, *spontaneous or self-governed* (an important distinction, as we have seen), and so on – we are providing an *internal* determination of the procession. Here too, ‘internal’ does not refer to a procession that occurs *ad intra* but to a manner of speaking about any procession, whether *ad extra* or *ad intra*, that emphasizes the immanent character of the procession itself: how does it occur? Thus, to say that certain processions are conscious is to provide an internal determination of these processions. To speak of a conscious procession of inner word from understanding is to provide both an external and an internal determination of the same procession: external insofar as there is ‘one from another,’ and internal insofar as it must be conscious.

(3) If we specify the procession in such general metaphysical terms as ‘same’ and ‘other,’ ‘potency’ and ‘act,’ ‘absolute’ and ‘relative,’ and so on, we are providing a *metaphysical* determination of the procession. ‘Per modum operati’ as a way of distinguishing the divine processions provides just such a determination, as we will see.

(4) A *natural* determination would speak of the procession in terms of a generic, specific, or individual nature: it is a physical or a chemical or a biological or a sensitive or a spiritual or a divine procession.

(5) An *analogical* determination would conceive the mode of procession of an unknown nature (for example, the divine) by likeness with the mode of procession of a known nature (for example, procession in the spiritual dimension of human consciousness).

Some of these concrete ways of specifying a procession may be combined. Lonergan gives the following five examples in which *external* and *metaphysical* determinations combine in the characterization of a procession:

(1) a procession *ad extra*, into another thing, that is, a procession of one thing from another thing – for example, producing something, creating, animal generation; here the mode of procession is determined in an external and metaphysical manner, since the principle and that which proceeds from it are named (external determination), and the metaphysical categories of ‘same’ and ‘other’ are employed in a particular manner (metaphysical determination);

(2) a procession *ad intra*, where the principle and what proceeds from it are within the same ‘thing,’ whether in the same subsistent or in the same consciousness or in the same faculty or potency; here again the mode of procession is determined in an external and metaphysical manner, since the principle and that which proceeds from it are named (external determination), and the metaphysical categories of ‘same’ and ‘other’ are employed, but in a different manner, and ‘same’ can mean ‘in the same substance,’ ‘in the same consciousness,’ or ‘within the same faculty or potency’ (metaphysical determination);

(3) a *processio operationis*, a procession *ad intra* in which the principle and what proceeds from it are related as potency and act; again, the determination of the mode is external and metaphysical: the principle and what proceeds from it are named, and the metaphysical categories of potency and act are employed to determine the mode of the procession; examples include the act of seeing proceeding from the potency of sight and from the eye; the act of understanding proceeding from what Scholastic philosophy called

the ‘possible intellect’ and the ‘intelligible species’; the act of willing proceeding from the will and from a habit received in the will;<sup>11</sup>

(4) a *processio operati*, a procession *ad intra* in which the principle is related to what proceeds from it as act to act; again the mode of determination is external and metaphysical, since the principle and what proceeds from it are named, the metaphysical category of act is employed in the determination of the mode of the procession, and the categories of ‘same’ and ‘other’ are at least implicitly appealed to; examples include the act of desiring or fearing proceeding from the act of seeing, the hypothesis proceeding from the act of understanding, the judgment proceeding from the act of grasping sufficient evidence, the decision proceeding from the practical judgment or judgment of value;

(5) a *processio per modum operati*: like a *processio operationis* and a *processio operati*, it is a *processio ad intra*; but unlike a *processio operationis* and like a *processio operati*, the *processio per modum operati* is one in which the principle and what proceeds are both act; but unlike even a *processio operati*, the *processio per modum operati* is one in which the act that is principle and the act that proceeds are really distinguished, not absolutely but relatively (*non ... secundum esse absolutum, sed secundum esse relativum*)<sup>12</sup>; they are not really distinct entities, but really distinct relations within the same *esse absolutum*; the determination again is external and metaphysical; and the definition has been thought out with one thing in mind: precisely in order to conceive and

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11 While the language here is both Scholastic and metaphysical, the point can be clarified in experiential terms: the act of understanding proceeds from the spirit of inquiry raising and answering questions; the decision proceeds from that same spirit of inquiry as concerned with the question, What is to be done? What would it be good for me to do? conjoined with one’s antecedent willingness.

12 Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 148-49.

speak about the divine mystery. Thus a procession that is ‘according to the mode of a *processio operati*’ (*per modum operati*) is a procession *ad intra* of act from act, where the acts are distinguished, not by an absolute independence in being from one another, but by relational properties (later called ‘notional acts’) within the same absolute act of existence. The determination of the procession is external (principle and what emanates from it) and metaphysical (act from act).

Lonergan then gives the following examples of other ways of determining the mode of procession than by external and metaphysical determination:

(6) when we use the expression *divine procession*, that is, when we speak of the procession of God from God, the mode of determination is still external, since it names the principle and what proceeds from the principle; but it is not a metaphysical determination but a natural one, since it specifies the procession in terms of the nature in which the procession occurs;

(7) the definition of *intelligent emanation* (or, in our terminology, autonomous spiritual procession) – a conscious procession of a real, natural, conscious act from a real, natural, conscious act, both within the spiritual dimension of consciousness and in virtue of that spiritual dimension of consciousness itself as such consciousness is determined by the prior act that is the principle of the emanation – employs a mode of determination that is both external (one from another) and, more importantly, internal, since it speaks of the procession as natural and conscious; and it employs a mode of determination that is natural (as well as metaphysical [act from act]), since it names the kind of nature (‘intellectual consciousness’ in Lonergan’s terms, ‘the spiritual dimension of consciousness’ in ours) in which such a procession occurs.

Now what makes the ‘psychological analogy’ an analogy is that in us intelligent emanation or autonomous spiritual procession is the procession of one act from another act, where the acts (for example, the act of understanding and the inner word that proceeds from it) are really distinct in an absolute fashion: insight is not concept, but is

rather the ground of concepts; reflective understanding is not a judgment of fact, but is rather the ground of such a judgment; existential ethical insight is not a judgment of value, but is rather the ground of such a judgment; whereas the procession of God from God, divine procession, is the procession of act from act where the distinction is not one of absolutely different acts but of really distinct relations of origin *within* the one act that is God. So we proceed from the internal mode of procession that we experience in intelligent emanation or autonomous spiritual procession to an analogical understanding of the internal mode of the divine procession. When we name the latter procession ‘divine procession,’ we are not determining it in an internal but in an external manner (‘God from God’); when we name it a procession *per modum operati*, we are determining it in an external and metaphysical manner; but when we say that it is understood on the basis of some likeness to what we experience as intellectual emanation or autonomous spiritual procession, we are giving a mediate, imperfect, and analogical *internal and natural determination* to a divine procession. No such determination can ever be more than mediate, imperfect, and analogical. And this means that no matter how great the similarity may be with human intellectual procession, the dissimilarity is ever greater. The intricate distinctions that Lonergan has made here culminate in the reader’s awareness of why this is the case. We do not know what God is, but what God is not: that is, we have no direct grasp of the internal processions natural to God; any faint grasp we may have must be mediate, imperfect, and analogical.

Lonergan’s first assertion moves, then, (1) from an external and natural determination (divine procession, God from God) employed in the confession of faith, to an external and metaphysical determination (*per modum operati*) that is simply an equivalent way of talking about the same thing; and then, through the mediation of this external and metaphysical determination, (2) to an internal and natural determination (*secundum similitudinem emanationis intelligibilis*) that enables us to understand analogically, imperfectly, and mediately how it is possible that the divine processions that

we confess in faith can be *processiones per modum operati*. Again, (1) we first transpose the external and natural determination that we use in our confession of faith (divine procession, ‘God from God’) to an external and metaphysical determination (*per modum operati*) that enables us to distinguish this procession from other types of procession already spoken of in the section in which intelligent emanation was defined (processions *ad extra*, *processio operationis*, and *processio operati*); and then (2) we try to *understand* what we have, given this external and metaphysical determination, by analogy with the internal and natural mode of determination that we employ when we speak of intelligent emanation (or, in our terminology, autonomous spiritual procession). The identification of ‘divine procession’ with ‘*per modum operati*’ is the first step. It simply transposes one way of talking about the reality in question (an external and natural way employed in the confession of faith) into another way of conceiving and determining the same reality (an external and metaphysical way employed in speaking of different kinds of procession). If there are divine processions (and we confess in faith that there are) they cannot be *ad extra* but must be *ad intra*; they cannot be *processiones operationis*, for in God there is no movement from potency to act; they cannot be *processiones operati*, for in God there is only one act; and so they must be *processiones per modum operati*, according to the mode of a *processio operati* in that they are processions of act from act, but also processions in which the act that is principle and the act that proceeds are really distinct, not in an absolute fashion but by relational properties alone; they are really distinct relations of origin (later to be called ‘notional acts’) constitutive of the one real infinite and pure act that is the divine ‘*actus totius entis*.’

Again, to speak of a divine procession is, as we said, to employ an *external* determination, but not a metaphysical determination; rather, the determination is natural: we are speaking of the procession of God from God, a procession proper to the divine nature, the procession characteristic of the generation of the Son from the Father or of the procession of the Holy Spirit from both. But the definition of an intelligent emanation –

a conscious procession of a real, natural, conscious act from a real, natural, conscious act, both within intelligent consciousness and in virtue of that intelligent consciousness itself as such consciousness is determined by the prior act that is the principle of the procession – is primarily a natural but *internal* determination. The divine processions, which are *per modum operati*, are understood on the basis of the likeness of this internal, experienced character of intelligent emanation. And so we are involved in an *analogical*, mediate, and imperfect, not a natural, determination of their internal mode or character as processions. We are employing an internal and natural determination (intelligent emanation or autonomous spiritual procession) to understand analogically the internal mode of a procession that we name ‘divine procession’ by external and natural determination (the generation of the Son from the Father and the procession of the Holy Spirit from both Father and Son). And supposing that there is in God intelligent emanation or autonomous spiritual procession conceived by remote analogy with the intelligent emanation or autonomous spiritual procession that we experience, we can understand how it can be true to speak of the divine processions with the external and metaphysical determination of *per modum operati*. This is the complicated structure of Lonergan’s argument at this point.

The assertion claims also that this gives us what seems to be the only possible analogy for conceiving systematically the divine processions, that is, for interiorly expressing that understanding that virtually suffices to resolve all the related questions in a treatise on the Trinity.<sup>13</sup> The analogy that I will suggest is, of course, distinct from the one that Lonergan presents, but not in such a way as to negate the claim that *secundum emanationem intelligibilem* is the only likeness that will provide us with a remote analogy for the divine processions. For the processions within the supernatural order created by the gift of God’s love are processions of act from act in the spiritual dimension

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13 For the above distinctions, see *ibid.* 144-51.

of consciousness, and this is precisely what is meant by the *emanatio intelligibilis* that establishes a suitable analogy. But as I have stressed already, it seems eminently sane to understand even our supernatural analogy by analogy with the natural analogy, and so we are dedicating ample space for the treatment of Lonergan's proposal in his earlier work on Trinitarian theology.

## 2 Steps in the Argument

The church's confession is expressed as follows in the Athanasian Creed: 'Pater a nullo est factus nec creatus nec genitus; Filius a Patre solo est, non factus nec creatus, sed genitus; Spiritus Sanctus a Patre et Filio, non factus nec creatus nec genitus, sed procedens' (DB 39, DS 75).<sup>14</sup> This is the doctrine that we are attempting to understand, the confession of divine processions, where the processions are named in an external ('one from another') and natural ('divine') fashion, and where one of them is generation and the other is not. The procedure, again, is to convert this confession into a statement where the processions are named in an external ('one from another') and metaphysical (*per modum operati*) fashion, and then to say that such a formulation could be understood in some obscure and remote fashion *if* we relied on an analogy with human processions of spiritual act from spiritual act.

The first part of the argument of the assertion, then, presents a technical formulation of the same doctrine, the doctrine that systematic theology is attempting to understand. This technical formulation shifts the determination of the procession to an

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<sup>14</sup> 'The Father is not made by anyone, not created by anyone, not begotten by anyone.

The Son is from the Father alone, and is not made, not created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, and is not made, not created, not begotten, but proceeds.' See *ibid.* 150-51.

external ('one from another') and metaphysical (in terms of 'act') mode of speaking. From a technical point of view, given what we have already seen about the modes of procession understood metaphysically, what can we say in this mode about the divine processions? This formulation will also help, Lonergan says, to remove an apparent contradiction in the doctrine, precisely the same contradiction that seems to affect the 'fundamental problem' that we saw earlier, namely, How is it that the Son and the Holy Spirit can be at once *a se* and not *a se*?<sup>15</sup>

In the second part of the argument a *hypothetical* systematic solution is proposed to the problem thus technically formulated. In other words, the question is raised, What is required in order that it be true that the divine processions be *per modum operati*? The answer is: The divine processions can be *per modum operati* if they can be understood analogically along the lines of intelligent emanation (or autonomous spiritual procession); this would be sufficient, and in fact is as far as we are able to go in understanding this mystery. So this hypothetical solution is offered in this second part.

And in the third part it is judged that this hypothetical solution seems to be the only way available to us of understanding the mystery that we confess. It is in this third part that very important specifications are given with regard to precisely *which* acts from *which* acts in human spiritual procession are most appropriate for an analogical understanding of Trinitarian processions. The core of the argument is found precisely here, that is, what distinguishes it from most other attempts at a psychological analogy.

In order better to grasp Lonergan's procedure here, it is well to indicate that first he reviews various attempts to treat theologically (or to ignore) the mystery of the

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15 See Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 132: 'It [systematics] is concerned to work out appropriate systems of conceptualization, *to remove apparent inconsistencies*, to move towards some grasp of spiritual matters both from their own inner coherence and from the analogies offered by more familiar human experience.' Emphasis added.

Trinity, and that he treats one of these at greater length in a number of places, whenever he criticizes what he calls ‘conclusions theology.’ It will help to grasp Lonergan’s procedure and his view of the role of theological conclusions if we compare his approach with that of the so-called conclusions theology.

Conclusions theology is described as follows: ‘... there are those who believe the scriptures and embrace the dogmas and seek theological understanding. But they think the understanding should be a theological conclusion demonstrated from the truths of faith and from naturally known principles. It eludes their notice that, while science is concerned with conclusions, understanding is concerned with principles. So, because they aim at conclusions, they do not arrive at understanding.’<sup>16</sup> In contrast is the procedure that Lonergan follows: ‘Then again, there are those who believe the scriptures, embrace the dogmas, and *deduce theological conclusions* [and this is as far as the theologians just discussed will go], but also proceed from those very conclusions to a technical formulation of a problem. They seek the solution to the problem not through deduction but through a hypothesis; and because they deny that we can attain any other understanding in this life, they think that the hypothetical understanding should be accepted.’<sup>17</sup> This is precisely what Lonergan is doing: he *is* deducing a conclusion, namely, that the divine processions are *per modum operati*; but that deduction has not yet given him the *understanding* that is the goal of systematics. That understanding is achieved when, given that the processions are *per modum operati*, he asks how that could be so and answers that they can be conceived by analogy with the intellectual emanations or autonomous spiritual processions of word and love that can be discovered in human consciousness.

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16 Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 153.

17 *Ibid.* 153, 155, emphasis added.

## 2.1 The First Step

Part 1 of the elaboration of the assertion, then, sets forth the technical formulation of the problem, in fact of the doctrine itself that is to be submitted to systematic understanding. In this part of the assertion, Lonergan *does* use metaphysical principles to deduce a theological conclusion from the truth confessed in faith. The conclusion does not give us understanding, but it does allow us to proceed to understanding, that is, to a hypothetical explanation of how the conclusion could be true. The conclusion itself differs from the doctrine of faith only verbally, and so it is theologically certain. This part of the assertion is a strict deduction from the truths of faith, using, as he says, metaphysical notions and principles available to everybody. Through these notions and principles, it offers nothing more than a technical formulation of the very same truth that we confess in faith.

The technical formulation states that a divine procession occurs *per modum operati*, according to the mode of a *processio operati*. Thus it corresponds to the first part of the assertion itself: ‘Processiones divinae, quae sunt per modum operati ...’ The deduction proceeds negatively at first, by way of eliminating other possibilities. Then it positively states its affirmation. And finally, it uncovers the roots of an apparent contradiction.

The negative portion proceeds through three steps. *First*, dogma, with a firm basis in scripture, denies that the Son and the Spirit are made or created, and so we know that divine procession is not a matter of making or creating; *second*, since in divine procession the same God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, a divine procession cannot be a *processio ad extra*; and *third*, while a divine procession is *ad intra*, it cannot be a *processio operationis*, for such a procession would be an origin of act from potency, nor can it be a *processio operati*, an origin even *ad intra* of one act from another act, where the distinction of the two acts is not only a real distinction but *secundum esse absolutum*:

in God, who is simple, there can be only one act, and that an infinite act.<sup>18</sup> So much for the first, negative part of the argument.

The positive part of this portion of the assertion states that divine procession must be *per modum operati*, according to the mode of a *processio operati*, in that it is a procession in which the principle and what proceeds from it, *actus principians* and *actus principiatas*, while they are really distinct, are not two acts really distinct *secundum esse absolutum* – there is only one God, and the three divine persons are consubstantial – but are distinct *secundum esse relativum*, that is, as mutually opposed relations within one and the same infinite act. In the language of the Council of Florence, everything in God is one except where the opposition of relation dictates otherwise (DB 703, DS 1130).<sup>19</sup>

The apparent contradiction appears in the two statements that (1) God is from God, and (2) God is one. If there is a real procession of God from God, there would seem to be two gods. But if God is one, there would not seem to be any procession of God

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18 Ibid. 157.

19 Perhaps it would be well to give this item in its entirety: ‘Sacrosancta Romana Ecclesia, Domini et Salvatoris nostri voce fundata, firmiter credit, profitetur et praedicat, unum verum Deum omnipotentem, incommutabilem et aeternum, Patrem et Filium et Spiritum Sanctum, unum in essentia, trinum in personis: Patrem ingenitum, Filium ex Patre genitum, Spiritum Sanctum ex Patre et Filio procedentem. Patrem non esse Filium aut Spiritum Sanctum; Filium non esse Patrem aut Spiritum Sanctum; Spiritum Sanctum non esse Patrem aut Filium: sed Pater tantum Pater est, Filius tantum Filius est, Spiritus Sanctus tantum Spiritus Sanctus est. Solus Pater de substantia sua genuit Filium, solus Filius de solo Patre est genitus, solus Spiritus Sanctus simul de Patre procedit et Filio. Hae tres personae sunt unus Deus, et non tres dii: quia trium est una substantia, una essentia, una natura, una divinitas, una immensitas, una aeternitas, omniaque sunt unum, ubi not obviat relationis oppositio.’

from God. Negatively, but only negatively, this contradiction is removed by distinguishing between a procession *ad extra* and a procession *ad intra*. In a procession *ad extra*, one thing, one complete reality, proceeds from another. If a divine procession were *ad extra*, there would be two gods or at least two complete realities. But a procession *ad intra* does not *necessarily* entail the existence of two distinct complete realities; it is not necessarily the case that one thing proceeds from another *secundum esse absolutum*. To quote again what we have already seen in Aquinas, ‘... id quod procedit ad intra processu intelligibili *non oportet* esse diversum; immo quantum perfectius procedit tanto magis est unum cum eo a quo procedit. Manifestum est enim quod quanto aliquid magis intelligitur tanto conceptio intellectualis est magis intima intelligenti et magis unum; nam intellectus secundum hoc quod actu intelligit, secundum hoc fit unum cum intellecto. Unde cum divinum intelligere sit in fine perfectionis ..., necesse est quod verbum divinum sit perfecte unum cum eo a quo procedit absque omni diversitate.’<sup>20</sup>

Now it is true that an internal procession *can* be and almost always is the procession of one act from another act within the same thing, where the two acts are distinct *secundum esse absolutum*. In human consciousness clear examples can be found in the procession of the first inner word (for example, an act of defining, or, more often, a hypothesis) from the act of understanding, and the procession of the second inner word, the judgment, from the act of grasping the sufficiency of evidence for the hypothesis. In either case, we are speaking of two acts that are really distinct *secundum esse absolutum*. And so Lonergan states that a solution to the apparent contradiction that proceeds by distinguishing *ad extra* and *ad intra* is merely negative, and that there is needed a positive solution that rests on a grasp of the difference between the divine nature and human nature. Generation *ad intra* does not occur in human beings. Only a positive doctrine

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 27, a. 1, ad 2m, emphasis added. For a translation, see above, p. xx, at note xx.

about the divine nature can give us some understanding of why generation *ad intra* is not incompatible with the divine nature. That positive doctrine is given in the second part of the argument, where the hypothetical solution is offered.

## 2.2 *The Second Step*

The positive resolution constitutes the second step in the argument of the assertion. The first step has deduced the conclusion that a divine procession is *per modum operati*. It has thus arrived, not yet at any *understanding* of divine processions, but at a *technical formulation* of the issue to be understood, that is, of the truth affirmed and confessed in faith. It has arrived at this technical formulation by deducing it from the truths of faith as a theological conclusion, using metaphysical principles to distinguish various modes of procession.

The second step seeks a hypothetical *understanding* of the truth thus technically formulated.<sup>21</sup> It proceeds through four steps: first, the divine processions can be *understood* to be *per modum operati* if we suppose that there is in God intelligent emanation or autonomous spiritual procession; second, such a deduction brings an increase, not of knowledge but of understanding; third, it is determined in what this increase of understanding consists; and fourth, it is explained that this acquired understanding is mediate, imperfect, analogical, and obscure. The next, third step will argue why this hypothesis is to be accepted.

There are three reasons for proceeding in this way. First, we cannot *demonstrate* that a procession *per modum operati* is an intelligent emanation, since from what is less determinate (*processio per modum operati*) we cannot demonstrate what is more determinate (*emanatio intelligibilis*). Moreover, demonstration is not to be sought of

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<sup>21</sup> See Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 153.

principles. There are principles that are per se known by reason; there are principles that are revealed by God and accepted in faith; and there are theological principles that are reached, not by faith alone nor by reason alone nor by deduction from faith and reason, but by the understanding that is the term of an inquiry undertaken by reason enlightened by faith. Such is the supposition of intelligent emanation in God. It is ‘worked out’ by a thinking that takes place in order to understand.<sup>22</sup> Third, *the present inquiry bears precisely upon such a matter of principle, for a principle is what is first in some set of related matters, and we are here treating the first matter to be treated in a systematic exposition of an understanding of Trinitarian doctrine.* This principle is not naturally known, nor is it divinely revealed and believed in faith, nor is it concluded from what is divinely revealed and believed in faith (as was the assertion of *per modum operati*). Rather, what is being sought is an *understanding* of the faith, an understanding of what has been revealed by God, proposed by the church, and believed in faith.

### 2.2.1 The Hypothesis

We begin, then, with the *hypothetical supposition* – ‘Let us suppose’ – that there is in God intelligent emanation, that is, dynamic spiritual consciousness, autonomous spiritual procession precisely in the sense of something like act from act. This is not an article of faith. It is not something that reason can know on its own resources. It is not a technical formulation of an article of faith. It is an intelligent hypothesis, and it will be employed to understand the article of faith – the Son proceeds from the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son – that has been technically formulated: procession

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<sup>22</sup> See *Verbum* 18, ‘a thinking out, an *excogitare*’ and 22-23, 51, for the notion of thinking in order to understand. For an alternative translation, ‘arrived at and clearly and distinctly conceived and formulated,’ see *The Triune God: Systematics* 53 note 28.

in God is not *ad extra*, nor is it *processio operationis*, nor is it *processio operati*, but it is *processio per modum operati*. Again, it proposes that the *processio per modum operati* that constitutes a divine procession is to be understood *by analogy* with what we experience in our own dynamic consciousness as an intelligent emanation or autonomous spiritual procession of act from act (*secundum similitudinem emanationis intelligibilis*). A divine procession can be, not simply affirmed through deduction from the articles of faith to be *per modum operati*, but also *understood* to be *per modum operati*, if (1) there is in God something like intelligent emanation, dynamic consciousness, autonomous spiritual procession of act from act, and (2) this emanation or procession is distinct from what we experience, where one act arises from another act and the two acts are distinct *secundum esse absolutum*. In God the *one* infinite act is both *principians* and *principiatus*, and so, when we speak of *actus principians* and *actus principiatus*, we are not speaking of two acts really distinct *secundum esse absolutum*, but of *really distinct relations of origin constituting the one infinite act* that is God. Again, there occur in us internal processions, *processiones ad intra*, that are processions of act from act, *processiones operati*; but there does not occur in us an internal generation or begetting, a *generatio ad intra* whose *terms* are constitutive of *one* act because they are *identical with the relations* of generation and generated. In the triune God terms and relations are identical.

Lonergan expresses the difference as follows in *Verbum*: ‘... the divine procession of the Word is not only real but also a natural generation. In us that does not hold. Our intellects are not our substance; our acts of understanding are not our existence; and so our definitions and affirmations [our inner words] are not the essence and existence of our children.’<sup>23</sup> We rely on the notion of a procession of act from act, a *processio operati*, to understand the divine processions – this is precisely what is meant by *per modum operati* – but the *real* distinction within the one act of two terms *only* by

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23 Lonergan, *Verbum* 208.

the mutually opposed relations that they *are* is not something to be found in the creaturely realm. It is a notion that has been thought out precisely in order to provide some obscure understanding of Trinitarian life.

This formulation takes us beyond conceiving divine processions to affirming divine relations, however, and we have yet to examine Lonergan's explanation of how the divine processions can be *understood* to be *per modum operati* – that they are *per modum operati* has already been affirmed in the first part of the assertion – if they are conceived on an analogy with the autonomous spiritual processions of the inner word from understanding and of the act of love from that same understanding and that same inner word, where the word itself is a judgment of value (second step); and why this seems to be the only manner in which such an understanding is attainable (third step). How does the supposition or hypothesis of intelligent emanation help us to understand that the divine processions are according to the mode of a *processio operati*, and so that, as we profess in faith, God proceeds from God?

What is going forward here is not a demonstration: the notion of *per modum operati* – which is already theologically certain when used as a formulation for the nature of divine procession – is of a lesser determination, is less specific, more generic, than that of *emanatio intelligibilis*, and so it cannot be concluded from *per modum operati* that divine procession is to be understood analogically *secundum similitudinem emanationis intelligibilis*. Thus the wording of this second part of the assertion is, If one supposes that there is intelligent emanation in God, it follows that there is a procession according to the mode of a *processio operati*.<sup>24</sup> We already know that divine procession is *per modum operati*. How can this be possible? It can be possible if divine procession can be understood *secundum similitudinem emanationis intelligibilis*.

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24 'Supposita in divinis emanatione intelligibili, sequitur processio per modum operati.'

Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 160-61.

The effort, obviously, is to reach a hypothetical understanding of what already is accepted as a technical formulation of what is believed in faith. Moreover, principles cannot be demonstrated, and we are dealing here with a matter of principle, with the first issue in an ordered treatment of Trinitarian systematics. This principle is neither naturally known nor divinely revealed, but a matter of *intelligentia fidei*, of an understanding of what *is* divinely revealed and believed in faith: ‘suppose this is the case; then it would follow that ...’

What, then, would an *emanatio intelligibilis et divina* be? As we have seen, an autonomous spiritual procession occurs in virtue of the dynamism of the spiritual dimension of consciousness itself as such consciousness is determined by some act. To suppose hypothetically that there is in God something like what we know as autonomous spiritual procession is to suppose hypothetically, then, (1) that there is consciousness in God and that this consciousness is intelligent, (2) that this intelligent consciousness is determined by some act, which in this case can be nothing other than infinite act, and (3) that this consciousness, so determined, is dynamic, that is, it consciously demands or requires an emanation.<sup>25</sup> All of these points are contained in the supposition that there is in God autonomous spiritual procession, *emanatio intelligibilis*.

For Lonergan, six consequences follow from these hypothetical suppositions.

*First*, the act that is principle of the emanation is the infinite act that is God. For there cannot be in God any real distinction between infinite act and divine consciousness, and so we cannot conceive them in such a way that one is really determining (infinite act) and the other really determined (divine consciousness). Divine consciousness *is* infinite act. Thus infinite act itself knows the ‘motive’ that calls for an emanation and determines what it will be (*motivum propter quod et secundum quod exigatur emanatio*), and by this

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 163.

knowledge and conscious exigence, infinite act is constituted as the act that is the principle (*actus principians*) of the emanation.<sup>26</sup>

*Second*, it follows that there truly and really proceeds within divine consciousness an act that is originated (*actum principiatum*). For it cannot be supposed that infinite act is limited by an inconsistency (*sibi non constare*), such that, while there is a conscious demand within it for an emanation, nonetheless the emanation does not exist, or that, while there is a demand that the emanation be within consciousness, nonetheless it is not within consciousness. By the very fact that there is posited an act that is principle, there necessarily also is posited a true and real emanation; and where there is a true and real emanation, there is also that which emanates, the act that proceeds (*actus principiatus*).<sup>27</sup>

*Third*, it follows that the *actus principiatus* is also infinite act: it is not nothing; and it cannot be finite, for (1) it is not created: everything created proceeds *ad extra*, but any act that proceeds within consciousness and in virtue of that consciousness itself proceeds *ad intra*; and (2) it is not contingent: whatever proceeds because of an exigence within divine consciousness proceeds by necessity.<sup>28</sup>

*Fourth*, then, it follows that God proceeds from God, for what is infinite is God.<sup>29</sup>

*Fifth*, it follows that the act that is principle and the act that proceeds are not really distinct *secundum esse absolutum*. For each is infinite, and the infinite is unique, and so there cannot be a real distinction *secundum esse absolutum* within infinite act.<sup>30</sup>

*Sixth*, it follows that they are really distinct *secundum esse relativum*. The real emanation that has been supposed gives rise necessarily to opposed relations of principle

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26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid. 163, 165.

and proceeding. This is so even when the same infinite act is both principle and proceeding, for the emanation in question is not causal. A causal emanation demands that cause and effect be really distinct absolutes. But the emanation or procession in question *is* an intelligent emanation, an autonomous spiritual procession, one that, while not causal, involves *because (quia)* and so is *intelligibilis*: ‘to love the good is right *because* loving proceeds from the good truly affirmed, and affirming the good is true *because* affirming proceeds from a grasp of evidence.’<sup>31</sup> Nor is there any reason why this truth and rightness are removed simply because the act of grasping, affirming, and loving is infinite act and infinite act is one.<sup>32</sup>

Lonergan in *Verbum* makes the point that it is precisely here that the difference between autonomous spiritual procession in us and in God shows up most clearly. The divine *dicere* is not a *producere verbum*, that is, it is not a causal relation, and there is not in God a *processio operati*, a procession of act from act.

In us there are two acts, first, an act of understanding, secondly, a really distinct act of defining or judging. In God there is but one act. But not only did Aquinas advert to this rather obvious fact but also he assigned the reason for this difference: ‘id quod procedit ad intra processu intelligibili, non oportet esse diversum; imo, quanto perfectius procedit, tanto magis est unum cum eo a quo procedit’ ...

There are two aspects to the procession of an inner word in us. There is the productive aspect: intelligence in act is proportionate to producing the inner word. There is also the intelligible aspect: inner words do not proceed with mere natural spontaneity as any effect does from any cause; they proceed with reflective rationality; they proceed not merely from a sufficient cause but from sufficient

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31 Ibid. 165, emphasis added.

32 Ibid.

grounds known to be sufficient and because they are known to be sufficient. I can imagine a circle, and I can define a circle. In both cases there is efficient causality. But in the second case there is something more. I define the circle because I grasp in imagined data that, if the radii are equal, then the plane curve must be uniformly round. The inner word of defining not only is *caused by* [productive aspect] but also is *because of* [intelligible aspect] the act of understanding. In the former aspect the procession is *processio operati*. In the latter aspect the procession is *processio intelligibilis*. Similarly, in us the act of judgment is caused by a reflective act of understanding, and so it is *processio operati*. But that is not all. The procession of judgment cannot be equated with procession from electromotive force or chemical action or biological process or even sensitive act. Judgment is judgment only if it proceeds from intellectual grasp of sufficient evidence as sufficient. Its procession also is *processio intelligibilis*.

What, then, does Aquinas mean when he writes: ‘id quod procedit ad intra processu intelligibili, non oportet esse diversum; imo, quanto perfectius procedit, tanto magis est unum cum eo a quo procedit?’ He does not mean that there can be production, properly speaking, when principle and product are absolutely identical. He does mean that there can be *processio intelligibilis* without absolute diversity, indeed that the more perfect the *processio intelligibilis* is, the greater the approach to identity. In us inner word proceeds from act of understanding by a *processio intelligibilis* that also is a *processio operati*, for our inner word and act of understanding are two absolute entities really distinct. In God inner word proceeds from act of understanding as uttering by a *processio intelligibilis* that is not a *processio operati*, at least inasmuch as divine understanding and divine Word are not two absolute entities really distinct ...

Indeed, the divine procession of the Word is not only real but also a natural generation. In us that does not hold. Our intellects are not our substance; our acts of

understanding are not our existence; and so our definitions and affirmations are not the essence and existence of our children. Our inner words are just thoughts, just *esse intentionale* of what we define and affirm, just *intentio intellecta* and not *res intellecta*. But in God intellect is substance, and act of understanding is act of existence; it follows that the Word that proceeds in him is of the same nature and substance as its principle, that his thought of himself is himself, that his *intentio intellecta* of himself is also the *res intellecta*. As there is an analogy of *ens* and *esse*, so also there is an analogy of the intelligibly proceeding *est*. In us *est* is just a thought, a judgment. But in God not only is *ipsum esse* the ocean of all perfection, comprehensively grasped by *ipsum intelligere*, in complete identity, but also perfectly expressed in a single Word. That Word is thought, definition, judgment, and yet of the same nature as God, whose substance is intellect. Hence it is not mere thought as opposed to thing, not mere definition as opposed to defined, not mere judgment as opposed to judged. No less than what it perfectly expresses, it too is the ocean of all perfection. Still, though infinite *esse* and infinite *est* are identical absolutely, nonetheless truly there is an intelligible procession. The divine Word is because of the divine understanding as uttering, yet ‘eo magis unum, quo perfectius procedit.’<sup>33</sup>

Thus Lonergan can claim that, if one supposes an intelligent emanation in God, there follow all the points that pertain to a divine procession and that have already been deduced from the truths of faith under the rubric of a *processio per modum operati*.<sup>34</sup> And

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33 Lonergan, *Verbum* 206-208.

34 ‘Supposita ergo emanatione intelligibili et divina, sequuntur omnia quae ad processionem divinam pertinent, quaeque sub nomine processionis per modum operati ex veritatibus fidei iam probavimus.’ Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 164.

a deduction yields some understanding, even when the premises are not anything more than supposition or hypothesis; therefore, if we suppose divine intelligent emanation, we arrive at some understanding of what we confess in faith.<sup>35</sup>

### 2.2.2 Understanding, Not Knowledge

What the supposition of intelligent emanation yields, then, is a hypothetical understanding of what we affirm in faith. More precisely, it yields a hypothetical understanding of how there can be processions *per modum operati* in God, where the first part of the assertion argued negatively that, if there are processions in God, they must be *per modum operati*. The supposition of intelligent emanation does not yield knowledge, for the conclusion follows from a principle that is not known but supposed (there are intelligent emanations in God). In this the reasoning is similar to that which occurs in scientific experimentation to test a hypothesis. If *A*, then *B*; but *B*; where *A* is the hypothesis and *B* the possible result of experimentation. The experiment does not prove *A*, as there could be many other explanations of *B*. But it does render *A* one possible explanation of *B*. In the case under consideration here, the conclusion is already known from other sources (first part of the assertion: divine processions are *per modum operati*); what this deduction does is show how it can be the case, how it might be possible. If intelligent emanation, then *per modum operati*; but intelligent emanation. The argument proceeds by supposing a principle that would make it possible that the conclusion, already known, be true. How can the doctrines be true? is the question for systematics. Wherever there is a deduction, the conclusion is known to the extent that the principle is known. But here the principle is not known but supposed, hypothetically posited, and so what is deduced is also not known from the force of the deduction, but supposed. While

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 165.

the conclusion – the divine processions are *per modum operati* – is known from the first part of the assertion, by being deduced from the truths of faith, the truth of this conclusion does not prove the principle from which it is derived: the same conclusion might be drawn equally well or better from another principle, as in every case of such a reasoning process: ‘If A, then B; but B; therefore, possibly A.’ ‘If *emanatio intelligibilis*, then *per modum operati*. But *per modum operati*. Therefore, possibly *emanatio intelligibilis*.’

If the hypothesis does not yield knowledge, it does yield understanding, an understanding that is mediated by the deduction itself, that is imperfect, and that is analogous – and this is the only way we can understand an infinite act that is rationally and morally conscious. And so, in the present deduction, it is only mediately, imperfectly, and analogously that we understand a procession *per modum operati*. This is not negligible, however. It is precisely the kind of understanding approved by the First Vatican Council.<sup>36</sup>

### 2.2.3 What Kind of Increase of Understanding?

The understanding thus yielded consists in reducing to one a number of elements that are both many and seemingly conflictual. For many elements are contained in the definition of a procession *per modum operati*, and they can be reconciled only in the infinity of God.

More specifically, there are consequences that follow upon the fact that God is infinite act, and there are other consequences that follow from the supposition that God is dynamically conscious. From God’s infinity it follows that what proceeds in God is infinite, and from the fact that the infinite is one and unique it follows that what proceeds

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 164-67.

and the principle from which it proceeds cannot be distinguished *quoad esse absolutum*. But from the conscious exigence in divine consciousness it follows that there is a principle, there is an emanation or proceeding, there is something that proceeds from the principle, and there is a real distinction *quoad esse relativum* between the principle and what proceeds.

As long as we consider each of these separately, there is no difficulty. But when they are considered together, there arise difficulties that manifest the depth of the mystery of the Trinity. Moreover, the argument of the assertion does not directly reconcile the reality of procession with the consubstantiality of what proceeds – it is precisely here that we are confronted with the *altitudo mysterii* – but indirectly and mediately it does reconcile them by reducing them to a common root, the act that is both infinite and dynamically conscious: from its infinity there follows consubstantiality, and from its dynamic consciousness there follows the reality of emanation. But this is the best we can do; beyond this our understanding cannot penetrate.<sup>37</sup>

#### 2.2.4 Mediate, Analogous, Imperfect, Obscure Understanding

And so the understanding thus yielded is imperfect. The one root to which everything is reduced is the infinite, rationally and morally conscious act that is God. A conclusion is understood only to the extent that the principle is understood, and a conclusion is not understood to the extent that the principle is not understood. Even if we can reduce to a common root everything pertinent to a procession *per modum operati* and to that extent reach some understanding, nonetheless the understanding reached is no better than our understanding of this one common root. But the root is the infinite, rationally and morally conscious act, and we do not understand the infinite in a positive way, but only in a

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid. 167.

negative way. Even our own rational and moral consciousness is something that we rather live than understand clearly and distinctly. While we suppose that this consciousness is an image of God, we also know that it is a very deficient image, through whose mediation we can conceive the divine consciousness only analogously and imperfectly. Moreover, we do not *know* there is dynamic consciousness in God; we reach this affirmation only on the basis that, if we presuppose it, those consequences follow which can also be concluded from the truths of faith (that is, that divine processions must be *per modum operati*). Nonetheless, such imperfection of understanding only confirms the intellectual divine emanation: ‘... never ... does [reason illumined by faith] become capable of understanding the mysteries the way it does truths which are its own proper object. For divine mysteries of their very nature so exceed the created intellect that even when they have been given in revelation and accepted by faith, that very faith still keeps them veiled in a sort of obscurity, as long as “we are exiled from the Lord” in this mortal life ...’<sup>38</sup> We can say of Lonergan’s treatment at this point what he says of Thomas’s trinitarian theology:

... the procedure of the *Summa* ... reveals the measure of significance to be attached to the *imago Dei*. As we have seen, there is a twofold systematization: first, our concepts are *in fieri*; secondly, their order is reversed and they stand *in facto esse*. As long as our concepts are in development, the psychological analogy commands the situation. But once our concepts reach their term, the analogy is transcended and we are confronted with the mystery. In other words, the psychological analogy truly gives a deeper insight into what God is. Still, that insight stands upon analogy; it does not penetrate to the very core, the essence of God, in which alone trinitarian doctrine can be contemplated in its full intelligibility; grasping properly *quid sit*

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38 Ibid. 169, quoting DB 1796 (DS 3016).

*Deus* is the beatific vision. Just as an experimental physicist may not grasp most of quantum mathematics, but under the direction of a mathematician may very intelligently devise and perform experiments that advance the quantum theory, so also the theologian with no proper grasp of *quid sit Deus* but under the direction of divine revelation really operates in virtue of and towards an understanding that he personally in this life cannot possess.

... do not think that Aquinas allows the psychological analogy to take the place of the divine essence as the one sufficient principle of explanation. The psychological analogy is just the side door through which we enter for an imperfect look.<sup>39</sup>

### 2.3 *The Third Step*

The third step consists in affirming that this particular analogy of intelligent emanation seems to be the only analogy we may employ for a systematic conception of the divine processions.<sup>40</sup> Thus, at this point Lonergan is arguing that the proposed solution ought to be accepted because no other solution is possible.

He tries to order the various criteria by which one may judge the issue, and in doing so he further characterizes and qualifies the particular analogy that he is employing. These further qualifications will be of the utmost importance for us as we attempt to locate the processions in human consciousness that will form not only a set of analogies for understanding Trinitarian life but also our very participation in that life as we play our part in determining the course of human history.

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<sup>39</sup> Lonergan, *Verbum* 208-209.

<sup>40</sup> 'Praeter similitudinem emanationis intelligibilis non alia esse videtur analogia ad systematicam conceptionem divinae processionis efformandam.' Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* 168.

The first two qualifications have to do with the way we conceive the processions that will constitute the analogy. That way or mode must be concrete, and it must be analogical.

*First*, then, the mode of conception must be concrete. The abstract definition of a procession – the origin of one from another – yields only a minimal formality that prescind from every concrete difference between modes. Thus it yields no understanding at all. Concrete conceptions distinguish different modes of proceeding for different natures,<sup>41</sup> as we saw above in the discussion of the various determinations of modes of procession.

*Second*, the mode of conception must be analogical. There is no immediate knowledge of God in this life, and all mediated knowledge of God is necessarily imperfect and analogical, since every finite medium is deficient to the utmost in representing the infinite, and all knowledge reached through a deficient medium is necessarily imperfect and analogical.<sup>42</sup>

*Third*, the analogy must be systematic, that is, it must be one that is explicitly and thematically employed to resolve, not just one question but an entire series of questions. One does not proceed systematically if one uses analogies only implicitly and non-thematically; and if one employs different and ever new analogies in distinct questions or even in the same questions, then one achieves only a rhetorical heap of examples. A theologian should proceed systematically, and so much the more if one is investigating the mode of the divine processions, for the divine processions provide the key to the whole range of Trinitarian questions. We do not begin a Trinitarian systematics by treating immediately the divine persons, but rather we start from the processions, since the key to the entire problem is to be found in the notion of procession and the question

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41 Ibid. 169.

42 Ibid. 169, 171.

of an appropriate mode of procession proper to the processions in God. Thus the analogy proposed should be such as to resolve virtually every other theoretical question about the triune God.<sup>43</sup>

*Fourth*, the analogy should proceed from what is naturally known, as Vatican I taught. The reason is that all analogical knowledge is mediate, and all mediate knowledge is grounded in some immediate knowledge. Therefore, since we know the supernatural only analogically, we know it only mediately, and so should proceed from things naturally known.<sup>44</sup>

*Fifth*, the analogy should proceed from an immediately known *nature*. Common metaphysical notions — ‘ens, unum, verum, et bonum, idem et diversum, actus et potentia, absolutum et relativum, et eiusmodi’<sup>45</sup> — provide one way of knowing things immediately and naturally, namely, by the analogy of being. These notions have contributed to the present discussion in that they have yielded the conclusion that a divine procession is *per modum operati*. But things can be known immediately and naturally also in accord with their generic or specific natures, and only an analogy that proceeds from a specific nature immediately and naturally known to us enables us to conceive a divine procession *per modum emanationis intelligibilis*. Similarly, in natural theology we can proceed by common metaphysical notions to determine that God is *ipsum esse*, but

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43 Ibid. 171.

44 Ibid. I have already indicated that Lonergan’s later suggestion of an analogy may be interpreted as at least opening on the possibility of an analogy that proceeds from the supernatural gift of grace. But even this will be understood by analogy with precisely the natural realities to which we are currently appealing. That is why I am going into so much detail on the analogy from nature, even if I wish to promote the analogy from supernatural participation in divine life.

45 Ibid. 170.

only by moving from an analogy with a specific nature can we determine as well that God is *ipsum intelligere*.

Moreover, the very definite conclusions that we can arrive at by employing common metaphysical notions would not enable us to understand systematically two *distinct* divine processions, one of which is generation and the other of which is not. Nor would such conclusions provide the common root for treating systematically not only the processions but also the relations and the persons and all other related issues. So the analogy of being is not sufficient; we must seek an analogy that proceeds from a determinate nature immediately and naturally known to us.<sup>46</sup>

*Sixth*, this nature must be spiritual. God is immaterial, and so the Trinitarian analogy must proceed, not from minerals, plants, and animals, but from human beings, and indeed from what is proper to them as human. Now, of the elements that are proper to human beings, some are strictly spiritual, while others depend intrinsically on the body, on vegetative life, or on sensitive life. To understand, to judge, and to decide are not only proper to human beings but also depend on matter only extrinsically,<sup>47</sup> whereas

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46 Ibid. 171, 173.

47 See Lonergan, *Insight* 540-41. 'Matter' is characterized as that whose functioning could not occur apart from the empirical residue, that is, 'apart from manifolds of instances in a space-time continuum, and apart from actual frequencies that nonsystematically diverge from ideal frequencies,' and so matter is defined as 'whatever is constituted by the empirical residue or is conditioned intrinsically by that residue.' The spiritual, then, or the immaterial is what is neither constituted by, nor conditioned intrinsically by, the empirical residue. Not constituted: 'inasmuch as we are understanding, we are abstracting from that residue; and inasmuch as we are grasping the unconditioned, we are attaining the lucid, fully rational factualness that contrasts so violently with the brute factualness with which instances similar in all

speech, for example, while proper to human beings, nonetheless immediately and necessarily proceeds from mouth and tongue and throat. Since nothing in God depends intrinsically on matter, any similitude of nature that there may be between God and human beings can be found only in those elements that not only are proper to human beings but also strictly spiritual.<sup>48</sup>

*Seventh*, the analogy must be from a spiritual *procession*, for only there is found a *similitudo naturae* to a divine procession: the analogy has to be from a procession, and one whose mode will give a *similitudo naturae*; only a spiritual procession will do. Nor

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respects still are different instances, with which the multiplicity of the continuum is noncountable because nonordinable, with which actual frequencies diverge from ideal frequencies in any manner provided it is nonsystematic. But if insight and grasp of the unconditioned are constituted quite differently from the empirical residue, so also are the inquiry and critical reflection that lead to them and the conception and judgment that result from them and express them.' Not conditioned intrinsically: 'Quite obviously, there is some conditioning. Our inquiry and insight demand something apart from themselves into which we inquire and attain insight; initially and commonly that other is sensible experience, and in it is found the empirical residue. But if sensible experience and so the empirical residue condition inquiry and insight, it is no less plain that that conditioning is extrinsic. Seeing is seeing color, and color is spatial, so that seeing is conditioned intrinsically by the spatial continuum. But insight is an act of understanding, and so far from being conditioned intrinsically by the empirical residue, understanding abstracts from it. Again, to grasp the unconditioned there is a prerequisite of a known fulfilment of conditions; commonly this fulfilment lies in sensible experience; still, the fulfilment is anything but unconditioned; and it is the unconditioned that intrinsically conditions a grasp of the unconditioned.'

48 Ibid. 173.

will those strictly spiritual processions suffice in which act proceeds from potency or habit. And it is not sufficient to consider the strictly spiritual mode only in common metaphysical categories; specific determination is necessary. What is required is a created spiritual procession in which (1) a strictly spiritual act proceeds (2) from a strictly spiritual act (3) according to a strictly spiritual way of proceeding. Every strictly spiritual act is a real, natural, and conscious act; every conscious act is within consciousness; and where a conscious act proceeds from a conscious act within consciousness, the procession itself is conscious and occurs somehow in virtue of consciousness itself; such acts are not epiphenomena. Moreover, every strictly spiritual act that we know of occurs in the intellectual and volitional dimensions of consciousness. So the analogy must be from the conscious procession of a real, natural, and conscious act from a real, natural, and conscious act, within intelligent consciousness and in virtue of that intelligent consciousness itself.<sup>49</sup>

*Eighth*, since we want a likeness of nature, we must attend to the internal mode of the procession. The phrase ‘in virtue of intelligent consciousness’ or ‘in virtue of the spiritual dimension of consciousness’ draws our attention to that internal mode, and helps us to qualify the mode of procession internally as itself a spiritual mode of proceeding. Sensitive consciousness is governed by specific laws, and intellectual consciousness by transcendental laws. Thus, as we have already seen, in sensitive consciousness a conscious act proceeds from another conscious act by the spontaneity of sensitive nature itself; that spontaneity is perfected by acquired dispositions and habits, so that it quickly and easily and with delight does what is fitting for this determinate nature in proper circumstances. But the spontaneity of intelligent consciousness is regulated by laws that are not bound to any particular nature but are ordained to the transcendentals themselves: to the intelligible, to being, to the one, to the true, to the good. It is insofar as it is

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49 Ibid. 173, 175.

governed by this transcendental orientation that the human spirit is master of itself, self-determining, autonomous: ruled, yes, insofar as it is constituted by its own transcendental desire, but ruling itself insofar as, under the agency of God, it determines itself to its own acts according to the exigencies of its own nature as intelligent. In this sense it is legitimate to offer imperatives or precepts to this self-ruling unfolding of spiritual desire: Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible. Thus whatever proceeds *vi conscientiae intellectualis* proceeds in virtue of a natural desire, an intellectual spontaneity, a tendency that is both conscious and transcendental. Such a tendency is displayed in questions, whether practical (What is to be done? Is it to be done?) or speculative (What is it? Is it so?) or existential (What am I to make of myself? Will I really make such of myself?). It is manifest in the precepts we direct to ourselves to inquire, reflect, deliberate. It is manifest in the reasons we offer for so proceeding: we must inquire so that we do not judge what we do not understand; we must reflect so that we do not mistake the false for the true; we must deliberate so that we do not blindly fall into perdition.

Nonetheless, there are different ways of proceeding in virtue of intelligent consciousness. When intelligent consciousness is determined by some conscious act, from that determined consciousness as from a proximately proportionate principle there proceeds another act. Such is the autonomy of freedom when we choose *because* and *insofar as* we judge; such is the autonomy of rationality when we judge *because* and *insofar as* we grasp the evidence; such is the autonomy of intelligent clarity when we define *because* and *insofar as* we grasp the intelligible in the sensible. But when intelligent consciousness is not already determined by a conscious intellectual act, we are more spontaneous than autonomous. Thus it is that we proceed from questions to an act of understanding. And when we proceed to conscious acts from dispositions and habits that of themselves are not conscious, the procession is so far from being autonomous that it occurs unconsciously.

The type of procession that, however spiritual, is more spontaneous than autonomous, that is, a procession from potency to act, will not suffice for a Trinitarian analogy. What is needed is the procession of one act from another act, an autonomous rather than spontaneous procession; as when, by virtue of consciousness determined by an act of understanding there proceeds an inner word, and by virtue of consciousness determined by a judgment of value, which itself is a complex inner word, there proceeds a decision.<sup>50</sup>

*Ninth*, the most suitable instance of such intelligent autonomy for a Trinitarian analogy is the procession of the word of a judgment of value from existentially reflective understanding and the procession of a decision from the word of a judgment of value, not in practical affairs and not in speculative matters, but *in the existential issues in which we inquire about ourselves, understand what we ought to be, judge how we can make ourselves be such, and proceed to the existential decisions through which we so constitute ourselves*. What is required is precisely the kind of autonomy that we argued for in our dialogue with Girard earlier in this work. For when we are inquiring about the triune God we are not considering God as creating or acting, and so we prescind from practical autonomy. Nor are we considering God insofar as God understands and affirms and loves all things, and so we prescind as well from speculative autonomy. Rather, we are considering God as God from eternity is constituted *in se* as triune, and therefore we take our analogy from the processions that exhibit *existential autonomy*.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 175, 177.

<sup>51</sup> This point is so important that we will cite Lonergan's Latin. '*Autonomia existentialis*. Tripliciter in homine exercetur illa autonomia secundum quam ex intelligentia oritur verbum et ex verbo oritur electio. Primo modo, in practicis quatenus homo intelligit, iudicat, eligit agenda et facienda. Altero modo in speculativis quatenus homo de universo quaerit, illudque quantum potest intelligit, unde et quale sit iudicat, ut

Thus, by a series of disjunctions Lonergan has argued that there is no *similitudo naturae* for understanding the divine processions other than the *emanatio intelligibilis* through which one conscious act proceeds from another conscious act in a manner that is both conscious and autonomous: the understanding can only be mediated, not immediate; the analogy should be explicit, thematic, and systematic, not implicit, unthematic, and rhetorical; the systematic analogy has to be grounded in a specific created nature and not just in metaphysical categories; the analogy from a likeness of nature has to be from a strictly spiritual nature, not a material nature; and the mode of strictly spiritual procession has to be conscious and autonomous, not conscious but spontaneous nor unconscious; nothing remains but the analogy suggested here.<sup>52</sup>

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denique in amorem quendam contemplativum universi prorumpat. Tertio denique modo in existentialibus quatenus homo de se ipso quaerit, et qualis esse debeat intelligit, et quemadmodum ipse se talem facere possit iudicat, unde procedit electio existentialis per quam, quatenus hic et nunc in se est, ipse se talem facit.

‘Proinde, analogia trinitaria ex exercitio autonomiae existentialis sumenda esse videtur. Qui enim de Deo trino quaerit, non Deum considerat ut creantem vel agentem, et ideo ab autonomia practica praescindit; neque Deum considerat quatenus omnia intelligit et iudicat et diligit, et ideo a speculativis praescindit; sed Deum considerat prout ipse Deus ab aeterno in se ipso constituitur ut trinus, et ideo analogiam ex processionibus secundum autonomiam existentialem sumit.’ Ibid. 176, 178.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. 179, 181.