

LONERGAN – CONSULTATION

Topic: Social Salvation
 Convener: Jennifer Sanders, Saint Louis University
 Moderator: Cecille Medina-Maldonado, Marquette University
 Presenters: Zane Chu, Saint Mary's College of California
 David Rohrer Budiash, *Review for Religious*
 Giadio De Biasio, Lonergan Institute, Boston College

This session was comprised of three papers, approximately twenty to twenty-five minutes each. The session concluded with a long group conversation, lasting roughly thirty minutes.

In his paper, “‘By a More Difficult Good’: The Social and Practical Significance of the Law of the Cross,” Zane Chu challenged the language of Bernard Lonergan’s “Law of the Cross” in light of a controversial comment made in response to the Canadian Residential Schools crisis. Chu takes issue with the terms “converting” or “transforming” such evils into good because these terms can make light of the suffering and evil. In order to suggest more pastorally sensitive language and the social implications of the language we use about evil and suffering, Chu put Lonergan’s *The Redemption* in dialogue with Paul Ricœur’s reflections on evil. Ricœur argues that there is no solution to evil on the level of thought, and that instead, we must nourish lament. This dialogue between Lonergan and Ricœur helped Chu suggest the language of “good in spite of evil.” Chu concluded his presentation by addressing the connection between religious conversion and the Law of the Cross. Ultimately, Chu argued that rather than phrase “transform evil into good,” a response more sensitive to those who have suffered grave evil and more capable of advancing social salvation would be “resisting/overcoming evil” and “good in spite of evil.” According to Chu, the latter formulations more properly emphasize what it is at the heart of the Law of the Cross, namely the doing of good in response to evil.

In his paper, “Three Contemporary Challenges to the Ecclesial Good of Order,” David Rohrer Budiash argued that Lonergan introduced a new idea into ecclesiology, namely, “the good of order,” which includes the importance of interpersonal relations as constitutive of any human good of order. According to Rohrer Budiash, “Lonergan succinctly referred to the church as a ‘good of order’ whose proper functional purpose is to achieve a flow of people into heaven.” After considering the development of Lonergan’s thought on “the good of order,” Rohrer Budiash put Lonergan’s thought in dialogue with *Lumen Gentium* and the idea that the church is both holy and in need of being purified. He then used the good of order as a heuristic to examine three challenges the church faces: the clergy sexual abuse crisis, institutional trust deficits, and polarization. He noted how each problem presents an issue within the social salvific structure (i.e., an issue in the ecclesial good of order), focusing on how each issue uniquely disrupts this order. In response to these disruptions of order, Rohrer Budiash argues that power is not enough to solve the issues. Rather, what is needed is redemptive suffering—the kind Lonergan has in mind in the Law of the Cross.

In his paper, “Salvation of Man, Salvation of Cosmos: Soteriological Comparison between Bernard Lonergan and Elizabeth Johnson,” Giadio De Biasio brought together

Elizabeth Johnson's *Creation and the Cross* and Bernard Lonergan's *The Redemption* in order to examine the question of how non-human creatures are connected to the salvation of the human race. That is, he examined the question of the salvation of the entire cosmos. De Biasio explained that in her book, Johnson is responding to contemporary ecological sensibilities and recovering Bonaventure's perspective. Therein, she presents a salvation for non-human creation, accusing the Anselmian model of "anthropocentric amartiocentrism." De Biasio then presented Lonergan's soteriology, which included an evaluation of Johnson's presentation of Anselm. Lonergan's model assumes the redemption of anthropic sin (original, personal, and social) through the same crucified and given "flesh" of the Incarnate Word. De Biasio was concerned to determine which of these two theologians best respects the ecclesial nexus *mysterium*, in light of the theological relationships between: creation and "new creation," sin and redemption, anthropological salvation and cosmic salvation. While De Biasio found fault with Johnson's reading of Anselm and the absence of a discussion of original sin, he found that her change in terminology from "human nature" to "human species" was an important contribution to thinking through the connection between the salvation of humanity and of the cosmos.

The questions that emerged in the conversation following the three papers were fruitful and encouraged the presenters to push their thought further. For example, Cynthia Crysdale suggested in response to Chu and De Biasio's papers that a major problem is a false understand of "cause" in the emergence of good from evil and in emergent probability, respectively. Given that each paper focused on the Law of the Cross, Cecille Medina-Maldonado asked each presenter to reflect on the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation. Bill Loewe asked De Biasio whether he thought the relationship between Johnson and Lonergan was dialectical or genetic. Jonathan Heaps asked Rohrer Budiash what the role of a theologian in particular should be with respect to healing the good of ecclesial order.

JENNIFER KENDALL SANDERS
Saint Louis University
Saint Louis, Missouri